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**DIRECTORY**

Inside this week

Pages 8 & 9



## Pasco's tourism boosts county's economy

By B.C. Manion  
bcmansion@lakerlutznews.com

An analysis by Downs & St. Germain Research Inc., consultants to Pasco County, reveals that 965,000 tourists visited Pasco County during 2018, with a \$615 million impact on the county's economy.

Downs & St. Germain Research conducted the county's first-ever visitor tracking study. They completed face-to-face, phone

and online surveys with Pasco County visitors. As a result, the researchers were able to profile visitors coming to Pasco, and to quantify economic impacts of tourism in Pasco.

Nearly three-quarters of Pasco's visitors in 2018 came from Florida, New York, Georgia, Michigan, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas and Canada, the researcher's report says.

Of those, 57 percent stayed at hotels or motels; 23 percent stayed with relatives

or friends; 14 percent stayed in a personal second home; 4 percent stayed at campgrounds/RV; and, 2 percent at vacation rental homes.

The typical travel party was made up of 2.4 people, and among those visiting, nearly a quarter reported they were accompanied by at least one person 18 or younger.

The vast majority of those visiting Pasco

See TOURISM, page 15A



CHRISTINE HOLTZMAN

## Sale promotes the importance of native plants

The Florida Native Plant Society, Nature Coast Chapter, had its biannual native plant sale on March 23 at the Harvester United Methodist Church, 2432 Collier Parkway in Land O' Lakes. Jonnie Spittler, chapter president, said a Florida native plant by definition is a plant that was recorded at the time when Ponce De Leon explored Florida. She said native plants are important to the state's environment and create habitat for wildlife. Customers at the plant sale could purchase plants grown in local native plant nurseries, which were accompanied by a plant profile to help them understand where to place in the yard and how to care for them. Chapter members and master gardeners also were there to answer gardening questions. Sale proceeds support the Florida Native Plant Society's mission of preservation, conservation, and restoration of Florida's native plants and the natural communities that support them. Above, Terri Palmer, left, and John Pagan, of Land O' Lakes, look over the assortment of bald Cypress trees. The pair was looking to add some native trees to their yard, and had already selected an Elderberry tree before stopping at the Cypress display.



Dwight Stempien, of Land O' Lakes, left, takes a break along with his 9-year-old son, Mason. They have two Wild Coffee plants. Stempien's wife, Jessica, was still busy shopping.



A close-up look of a Pinxter Azalea bloom. According to the plant profile, the shrub blooms in the spring and flowers the best in full sun, is very showy and fragrant, has a long life, and is one of Florida's most beautiful native azaleas.

## Pasco lifts ban on dock roofs on freshwater lakes

Debate goes on over allowing dock roofs in coastal communities

By B.C. Manion  
bcmansion@lakerlutznews.com

A longstanding quest to permit roofs on docks on Pasco County's inland lakes succeeded last week, when the Pasco County Commission voted unanimously to lift the ban.

It remains, uncertain though, whether that same privilege will be extended to owners of waterfront property in coastal communities. The issue will be coming back for additional discussion at a future board workshop.

Meanwhile, people such as Joe Steffens, who lives on Bell Lake in Land O' Lakes, can build a roof over his dock.

Steffens, who is in the marine construction business, also will be able to build them for other lakefront property owners, too. He

See DOCK, page 15A

## This community servant knew how to find life's silver lining

By B.C. Manion  
bcmansion@lakerlutznews.com

Rosie Heim — a former Honorary Mayor of Land O' Lakes, and a former president of the board of the Lutz-Land O' Lakes Woman's Club — has succumbed to her battle with cancer.

She will be remembered in a celebration of life service on April 13 at 10:30 a.m., at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 20735 Leonard Road in Lutz. A reception will follow.

Rosie was widely known around Central Pasco for her willingness to serve local organizations, and as an Avon representative — who always dispensed her brand of good cheer, while delivering her customer's orders.

Mary Rathman, editorial assistant at The Laker/Lutz News, a regular customer, developed a deep affection for Rosie.

"I'll miss her smiles and hugs," said Rathman, who admired Rosie's ability to remain upbeat, despite her grim prognosis.

"She just had such an amazing attitude throughout her ordeal and she was always happy," Rathman said.

When Rosie decided to toss her hat into the ring for a run at honorary mayor of Land O' Lakes, she did so with the intention of raising the profile of the GFWC Lutz-Land



FILE

Rosie Heim was widely known in Central Pasco. She belonged to several organizations and generously shared her smiles and goodwill.

O' Lakes Woman's Club. The club is already widely known in Lutz, but she wanted more people in Land O' Lakes to become familiar with the club and its good works.

In a 2017 interview, she told The

See ROSIE, page 15A



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# Jelly Bean Fling ushers in Spring

By Brian Fernandes  
 bfernandes@lakerlutznews.com

It's time to grab those Easter egg baskets for the annual Jelly Bean Fling in Dade City. The event, now in its third year, will be on April 6 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Kids will be provided baskets for an all-day egg hunt. Each plastic egg will contain sweet treats inside. Other activities offered through the day include a barrel train ride with Conductor Joe at the helm, and a chance to explore the interior of various vehicles with Touch-a-Truck. A bounce house with a slide will be available, as well as pony rides. Other animals will be there, too, as the Blake Veterinary Hospital will be offering a petting zoo. There will be carnival attractions inside the Mabel Jordan Barn, which kids can enjoy with five free tickets they receive at admission. Face painting, rock painting, hat decorating and making tulip crafts will be the featured activities there. Everyone's favorite bunny, Jasper, will make an appearance - posing for free snapshots with guests from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., and 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. Food trucks will be on site, for those who want to grab a bite to eat, and there will be vendors offering wreaths, clothing, soaps, honey, jewelry and other items. The event also features live music from Mr. Tommy, who will encourage guests to sing along at his shows, scheduled for 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. The function will be at the Pioneer Florida Museum and Village, 15602 Pioneer Museum Road in Dade City. Parking is free, while admission will be \$10 for adults, \$5 for students and free for those under age 5. Additional tickets for the barn games can be purchased at 50 cents each. For more information, contact Brenda Minton at (352) 567-0262 or at BMinton053@gmail.com.



FILE  
 The Jelly Bean Fling just isn't complete without a special visit from Jasper, the Easter bunny. He will be one of the event's attractions on April 6.

### If you go Jelly Bean Fling

**WHERE:** Pioneer Florida Museum and Village, 15602 Pioneer Museum Road, Dade City  
**WHEN:** April 6 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
**COST:** \$10 for adults, \$5 for students, and free for those under age 5  
**DETAILS:** The public is invited to attend an Easter-themed event with an egg hunt, petting zoo, kids' rides, games and a visit from the Easter bunny.  
**INFO:** Contact Brenda Minton at (352) 567-0262 or at BMinton053@gmail.com.

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# Old State Road 54 widening will ease East Pasco congestion

By Brian Fernandes  
 bfernandes@lakerlutznews.com

Work is underway to widen Old State Road 54, from Wesley Chapel to Zephyrhills, from a two-lane road to four lanes. The 4.5-mile widening, which started in November 2017, will ease congestion between Curley and Morris Bridge roads. The project will create a more consistent flow of traffic, as Old State Road 54 is a six-lane road, west of Curley Road. "You have multiple lanes, multiple directions to the west," said Zach Stringer, project administrator for the Florida Department of Transportation. "Where it's previously reduced down to two lanes, that's where we're continuing multi-lanes with divided medians." Stringer added that the expansion will also accommodate increased traffic on Morris Bridge Road with the extension of State Road 56, which is another project that is also underway now. The construction on Old State Road 54 will first prioritize the completion of two south-end lanes heading eastbound, two north-end lanes heading westbound and then incorporating a median in between. The median will offer several openings to allow motorists to make necessary turns.

In addition, a north-end sidewalk and a 10-foot-wide multipurpose trail on the south end, will be built along the project's entire stretch on Old State Road 54. The project administrator said currently "we're doing Phase 1A, which is constructing temporary asphalt to the south and short portions of temporary asphalt to the north for drainage crossovers." Short-term asphalt placement allows space for traffic diversion. With additional space, workers can install and connect drainage pipelines from the north end to the south end of Old State Road 54. The second phase is also in the works, as well, Stringer said. On the evening of March 19, eastbound and westbound traffic was shifted further south to construct the two-lane expansion of the north end. Future lane closures will be scheduled at nights and early mornings to avoid conflicting with heavy traffic hours. The closures on open stretches of road will be from 8 p.m. to 6:30 a.m., while those at signalized intersections will be between 10:30 p.m. to 5:30 a.m. The \$42.5-million development is slated for completion during the summer of 2021.

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# Sharing a meal, supporting each other

By B.C. Manion

bcmansion@lakerlutznews.com

The Power Gals of Land O' Lakes began with a simple premise: Why not start a group where women could meet to have lunch and support one another?

And, that's exactly what happened. The club has no membership fees or mandatory attendance.

Women come, have lunch and talk for a minute about their business, upcoming events or anything else they want to share.

The club has its monthly meeting on the third Thursday of the month, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Pizza Villa, 21501 Village Lakes Shopping Center Drive in Land O' Lakes.

Power Gals was the brainchild of Karla Arita, a real estate agent with People's Choice Realty Services, and Kim Smith, a loan officer with Fairway Independent Loan Corporation.

It launched more than a year ago. Ten women showed up to the first meeting.

Now, the club has 300 members, with chapters in Land O' Lakes, Wesley Chapel, Spring Hill, Boca Raton, Miami and in Forney, Texas, Arita said.

"We're here, not just to promote ourselves; we're here to support each other," Arita said, during the club's March 21 meeting in Land O' Lakes. "That's what sisterhood is all about. We are more than just a regular networking group. We are an extended family. We support each other."

Then, women began introducing themselves.

On this particular day, there were two hair stylists, two travel agents, a financial advisor, a handmade soap maker, a banker, an etiquette expert, an insurance agent, a relocation specialist, a coffee saleswoman, a pet sitter, a life coach, an inspirational speaker, a jewelry saleswoman and a credit card processing expert — among those gathered.

As they made their way around the room, it didn't take long for one woman to ask for the group's support. Her husband has just been diagnosed with cancer, and she asked for the group's prayers.

Without missing a beat, the group immediately responded by joining together to pray for him.

## Power Gals of Land O' Lakes

**WHEN:** Meets on the third Thursday of the month, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
**WHERE:** Pizza Villa, 21501 Village Lakes Shopping Center Drive, Land O' Lakes  
**COST:** Buy your own lunch.  
**DETAILS:** Networking group about women from diverse occupational backgrounds supporting and promoting each other.  
**INFO:** Call Karla Arita at (813) 408-2038; or, visit PowerGals.net.



Ashley Jennings said the women in Power Gals have each other's backs, professionally and personally.

As the women spoke, they talked of upcoming events, job openings and other free networking opportunities.

When the luncheon wrapped up, several women lingered in the restaurant, chatting with each other about business ventures, or just catching up.

Erica Torres-Grubbs, who owns Brightway, The Torres-Grubbs Agency, with her husband, said she enjoys belonging to Power Gals.

"The whole group has been great for me," Torres-Grubbs said, noting she's been a member for eight months.

"We exchange information, but we also build personal relationships," she said, also noting she's made business connections and has grown personally.

Lori Judd, a travel agent, was attending her first Power Gals meeting. She was impressed.



B.C. MANION

Maxine Rosen, a financial advisor, said belonging to Power Gals is like being a member of a sorority, without the hazing.



Karla Arita, who came up with the idea for the group along with her friend Kim Smith, said the group's goal is for members to promote themselves and support each other.



Erica Torres-Grubbs said Power Gals share information and build personal relationships.



Lyzbeth Piper said Power Gals share such a tight bond, they feel like family members.

wealth of experience and are helpful.

"It's nice to have somebody to talk to, and just bounce things off of," Jennings said.

"It's women empowering women," Jennings said. "Whether it's business or personal, these ladies have your back."

Maxine Rosen, a financial advisor, has been with the club since Day 1, and is completely sold on its value.

"It's truly a sisterhood. It's like a sorority, without the hazing," Rosen said.

She has tremendous regard for Arita.

"I've met a lot of wonderful people in my life — I have never met anybody like Karla, the most giving, kind, generous, empathetic, warm, loving individual."

Rosen offers this advice to women who want to know more about Power Gals: "Please come and join us, and make new friends."

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## SENIOR CENTER ONE-DAY CLOSURES

All Pasco County Senior Services center locations will be closed April 5, to recognize their registered clients at an offsite event. Meals will be furnished in advance for homebound clients and registered congregate seniors. All six centers will resume regular hours on April 8.

## INTERACTIVE THEATER

The Creative Arts Theatre for young audiences will present "Wake Up, Brother Bear" at the New Tampa Regional Library, 10001 Cross Creek Blvd., April 4 at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., for ages 2 to 7. Children can join the action with a small bag of props that help create magical moments. The show also will be presented at the Keystone Recreation Center, 17928 Gunn Highway in Odessa on April 11 at 10:30 a.m. (limited to 50 children). Those interested should register through the calendar at HCPLC.org.

## HOW TO BUDGET

The Arthenia L. Joyner University Area Community Library, 13619 N. 22nd St., in Tampa, will offer a class on budgeting and saving on April 4 at 4 p.m. Participants can learn the basics of financial wellness. The guest speaker will be Michelle Christie, GTE senior community financial educator. For information, call (813) 273-3652.

## CRAFTY STORYTIME

The Zephyrhills Public Library, 5347 Eighth St., will offer a Crafty Storytime on April 4 at 10 a.m., for kids ages 3 to 5 and their parent or caregiver. The theme will be Spring, Bugs and Bees. For information, call (813) 780-0064.

## MAKE A PLANT HANGER

The New River Library, 34043 State Road 54 in Wesley Chapel, will host a class for teens on April 4 at 4 p.m., to make a T-shirt macramé plant hanger. All materials will be provided. For information, call (813) 788-6375.

## THURSDAY MUSICALE

Thursday Musicales will present its "Spring Is In The Air" April 4 at 2 p.m., at the

## Fish Fry dinners

Community United Methodist Church in San Antonio will have its all-you-can-eat Fish Fry, including French fries, Cole slaw, baked beans and dessert for \$7.99 per person on April 5 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., at the parish hall, 32606 Michigan Ave. Take-out will be available.

Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church, 2348 Collier Parkway, will host a Lenten Friday Fish Fry on April 5 and April 12, from 3:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. The cost is \$10 for adults, \$5 for kids, and \$30 for a family (parents and three children age 13 and younger). Desserts will be available for an extra cost. Beer and wine will be \$2.



Hudson United Methodist Church. This is the finale for the group's 71st season. The nonprofit group awards scholarships to high school students pursuing music degrees in college. For information, call Sheila Kotter at (727) 514-4076.

## CHARITY POKER TOURNEY

The Women's Council of Realtors will host a Charity Poker Tournament on April 4 at 5 p.m., at O'Brien's Irish Pub, 15435 N. Dale Mabry Highway. Happy Hour, networking and a cash bar start at 5 p.m.; dinner at 6 p.m.; an auction at 6:45 p.m., and poker begins at 7:15 p.m. A \$75 donation includes dinner and starting 10K chips. Dinner only is \$25. For information and to RSVP, call Linda Calebro-Kuder at (813) 293-1135.

## SPRING BOOK SALE

The Land O' Lakes Library, 2818 Collier Parkway, will host a Spring Book Sale on April 5 and April 6 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For a sneak preview, pay \$5 on April 4 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., to get first pick. All proceeds go to support library programs. For information, call (813) 929-1214.

## WEAVING GROUP

The Hugh Embury Library, 14215 Fourth St., in Dade City, will host the Woven Together Weaving Group on April 5 from noon to 2:30 p.m. Participants can compare and discuss weaving techniques, looms, spinning wheels, threads, yarns, color and more. Bring your own tools and materials. For information, call (352) 567-3576.

## SMART DRIVER COURSE

The AARP Smart Driver Course will be offered at the Land O' Lakes Library, 2818 Collier Parkway, on April 5, for ages 50 and older. Preregistration is required by calling Bev Cogdill at (813) 907-3908.

## HAUNTED WALKING TOUR

The Dade City Heritage and Cultural Museum is presenting Dade City's very first Haunted History walking tour on April 5 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Experience "Dade City After Dark" through history, mysteries, legends and lore. Tickets are \$25 per person, age 21 and older. Tickets are available at the Dade City Heritage and Cultural museum, 14206 U.S. 98 Bypass in Dade City.

## PHOTO COMPETITION

West Pasco Audubon and the Pasco Fine Arts Council will host "The Nature and Wildlife of Tampa Bay" photography competition April 6 from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., at the J.B. Starkey Wilderness Park Environmental Education Center, 10500 Wilderness Road in New Port Richey. Photographers will compete in categories such as birds, other nature, and youth photography (ages 12 to 17). Admission is free. The deadline for entries is April 5. For details, visit [WestPascoAudubon.com](http://WestPascoAudubon.com).

## POTTERY SHOW & SALE

The San Antonio Pottery Student Art Show & Sale will take place April 6 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., at Jack Boyle's San Antonio Pottery, 11903 Curley Road in San Antonio. There will be light refreshments and live music. All proceeds from the heart ornament sales (\$5 each) and 10 percent of the spins on a potter's wheel (\$10) will go to The Thomas Promise Foundation. Admission is free. For information, call (352) 588-4228.

## MAKE A SPRING BAG

The Land O' Lakes Library, 2818 Collier Parkway, will offer a class to sew a spring bag on April 6 from noon to 2 p.m., for ages 9 and older. Participants can make a little reversible bag to hold small personal items. Registration is required through the library's

online calendar or at its information desk. A Foundry waiver and safety forms are required. Call (813) 929-1214.

## CACTUS SALE

Kessler's Cacti & Things will host its two-day spring plant sale April 6 and April 7 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., at Bearss Groves, 14316 Lake Magdalene Blvd., in Tampa; and again on April 13 and April 14 at the USF Botanical Gardens, 12210 USF Pine Drive in Tampa. Participants also can "Ask a Botanist." The event is rain or shine. For information and directions, call (813) 751-9409.

## CHANCEL CHOIR

The Chancel Choir at Grace Lutheran Church, 3714 W. Linebaugh Ave., in Carrollwood, will perform "Faure Requiem" on April 6 at 7 p.m., featuring two soloists, a string ensemble, an organist and a harpist. A reception will follow the program. Admission is free, but donations will be accepted. For information, visit [GraceTampa.org](http://GraceTampa.org), or call (813) 961-8747.

## ORCHID CLUB

The Tampa Orchid Club will have its annual Orchid Auction on April 6 at 10 a.m., at the USF Botanical Gardens. Guests can preview the plants at 9:30 a.m. Admission and parking are free. Orchid supplies will be available for sale, and there will be an orchid basket drawing. For information, call Barbara Barkhurst at (813) 949-7467.

## FASHION SHOW & LUNCH

The Columbiettes No. 8104 from Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church in Land O' Lakes will present "Sea Cruise," a fashion show and luncheon on April 6 at 11 a.m., at The Groves Golf Club, 7924 Melogold Circle in Land O' Lakes, to benefit its scholarship fund. There will be theme basket raffles, door prizes and entertainment. Doors open at 10:30 a.m. Tickets are \$30. For information, call (813) 996-0017.

## IMAGINATION DAY

Imagination Day, a free family fun day, will take place April 6 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Westshore Plaza, 250 Westshore Plaza in Tampa. There will be hands-on activities, multiple interactive arts and crafts booths, and more. The first 100 kids receive a free superhero cape and mask. For information, call (727) 674-1464.

Continued on next page

## Sewing Center

In this two day event, you will learn to make six different projects, plus you will learn valuable embroidery tips and techniques.

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You will be amazed at how much you can change in just six weeks. Challengers lose between 9 and 28 pounds, and are less hungry, see food cravings disappear, sleep better, and report they are happier and less stressed.

After the Challenge, we celebrate with a huge party and give prizes to our biggest winners, including a Cruise For Two and beautiful crystal awards for our Top 20.

We want you to experience how amazing you can feel in only six weeks, so go to our website now, [6WeekBTC.com](http://6WeekBTC.com), before all Challenge spots are filled. It will sell out, so don't delay.

For more 'Samantha says' columns, go to [www.SamanthaTaylorFitness.com/samanthasays](http://www.SamanthaTaylorFitness.com/samanthasays)  
Published April 3, 2019 in The Laker/Lutz News

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FITNESS

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## JELLY BEAN FLING

The annual Jelly Bean Fling at the Pioneer Florida Museum & Village, 15602 Pioneer Museum Road in Dade City, will be April 6 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. There will be photos with the Easter Bunny, an egg hunt, a bounce house and slide, a petting zoo, Touch-A-Truck, face painting, games, barrel train rides and vendors. Mr. Tommy also will perform. Admission is \$10, \$5 for students, and free for ages 5 and younger. Parking is free. For information, visit [PioneerFloridaMuseum.org](http://PioneerFloridaMuseum.org).

## GOOD DEEDS FESTIVAL

The Appreciate Pasco Good Deeds Day Festival will be April 7 from noon to 5 p.m., at Florida Trailer Solutions, 36822 State Road 54 in Zephyrhills. There will be giveaways, arts and crafts, vendors, entertainment, food and prizes. Guests can bring a chair. Admission is free. For information and to RSVP, visit [bit.ly/GoodDeeds2019](http://bit.ly/GoodDeeds2019).

## QUARTER AUCTION

The GFWC Pasco Junior Woman's Club will present a Quarter Auction on April 7 at 6 p.m., at the Lexington Oaks Community Center, 26304 Lexington Oaks Blvd., in Wesley Chapel, to benefit the Faces of Courage Foundation. Admission is \$10 and includes finger foods, beverages and your first auction paddle. Additional paddles will be \$5 each. The auction starts at 6:30 p.m. For information, visit [GFWCpascojwc.blogspot.com](http://GFWCpascojwc.blogspot.com).

## GARDEN CLUB WINE-TASTING

The Dade City Garden Club's annual "Uncorked," an afternoon of wine, food, music (and now, beer), will take place April 7 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., at 13630 Fifth St., in Dade City. Participants, age 21 and older only, can taste wine, beer, appetizers, win prizes, view cooking demonstrations, listen to music and stroll the gardens. Tickets are \$40 in advance. Proceeds will benefit the club's historic building and garden. For information and tickets, contact Debbie Parks at [dlgparks1@gmail.com](mailto:dlgparks1@gmail.com), (352) 567-9003 or (813) 714-5591.

## SHELTERBOX FUNDRAISER

The GFWC Lutz-Land O' Lakes Woman's Club will host an outreach fundraiser April 8 from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., at Hungry Harry's Family Bar-B-Que, 3116 Land O' Lakes Blvd., in Land O' Lakes. Twenty percent of sales, eat-in or takeout, will help purchase a ShelterBox, which contains temporary shelter and lifesaving supplies for displaced families after a disaster.

## PHOTO FORENSICS

The Lutz Branch Library, 101 W. Lutz Lake Fern Road, will present "Genealogy: Photo

## SAVE THE DATE

The Out & About 2019 Fantastic Summer Expo will take place **April 20 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.**, at Plantation Palms Golf Club, 23253 Plantation Palms Blvd., in Land O' Lakes. The event will include an egg hunt, photos with the Easter Bunny, prizes, raffles, games and activities, food and beverages, and booths with information on day trips, museums, sporting activities and more. **Admission is free**, and free parking and shuttle service will be provided from Harvester United Methodist Church, 2432 Collier Parkway.

Forensics" on April 8 at 12:15 p.m., for adults. The guest speaker will be Kelly Whitlock of Tampa Bay Roots. Participants can learn how to identify people, organize photos, and store photos and images. For information, call (813) 273-3652, or visit [HCPLC.org](http://HCPLC.org).

## ART CLUB MEETING

The Zephyrhills Art Club will meet April 8 at the Elks Lodge, 6851 Wire Road in Zephyrhills. Guests can bring in artwork for a brief critique; help assemble colored pencil squares to create a montage; discuss upcoming field trips and workshops; and have refreshments. All levels of artists can attend. For information, email Jo Ann Weatherbee at [jagweatherbee@myfairpoint.net](mailto:jagweatherbee@myfairpoint.net).

## TOY PAINTING

The Land O' Lakes Library, 2818 Collier Parkway, will host a guided toy-painting class for charity on April 8 from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., for ages 15 and older. Participants can paint wooden cars and trucks for donation. A foundry waiver is required. To register, call (813) 929-1214.

## SHUTTERBUGS MEETING

The Hugh Embry Library, 14215 Fourth St., in Dade City, will host the Hugh Embry Shutterbugs on April 8 from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Participants can share photographs, discuss photography tips, plan outings and projects, using a phone camera, a point-and-shoot, or an SLR. For information, call (352) 567-3576.

## GARDENING SERIES

The UF/IFAS Pasco Extension One Stop Shop, 15029 14th St., in Dade City, will offer a "Spring into Gardening" series on April 8 (vegetable gardening basics) and May 13 (composting horse manure), from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Participants can tour the Pasco County Farmden & Community Garden after each class. For information, contact Eden Santiago Gomez at (352) 518-0156 or [esantiagogomez@pascocountyfl.net](mailto:esantiagogomez@pascocountyfl.net). To register, visit [bit.ly/spring\\_gardening](http://bit.ly/spring_gardening).

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Children under the ages of 13 will be provided with Easter baskets (while supplies last) when they come in. The hunt will be all day and the eggs will be hidden on the grounds of the museum (NOT INDOORS) and will be replenished during the day.

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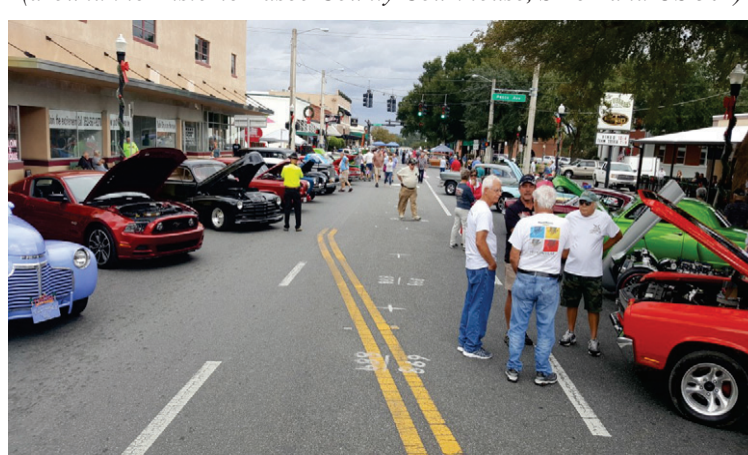
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# Grieving parents want to offer comfort to others

By Brian Fernandes  
bfernandes@lakerlutznews.com

Months after losing their infant son, Alissa Rodriguez and Ryan Mellor have donated to AdventHealth Zephyrhills the same kind of device that helped provide them comfort in the hours immediately following Collin's death.

During a March 26 ceremony at the hospital, the Wesley Chapel couple provided a CuddleCot to be used by other families that are going through the same tragic circumstances that they experienced.

Chaplains, medical staff and family gathered in a hospital room at AdventHealth Zephyrhills, as the couple presented their gift.

The CuddleCot is a device which uses flowing water to cool a pad, which can be placed in a basket, or in the arms of a parent, to provide extra time with the baby.

"We're so grateful to be able to have this donation of the CuddleCot, because it gives those moms (and dads) the opportunity (to hold the baby) before they say goodbye," said Sonia Yaksich, nurse manager of the Women's Health Center at AdventHealth Zephyrhills. "This is a beautiful and perfect way for families to provide a memory for their child."

As the couple made their donation, they were bestowed with a plaque honoring the memory of Collin Sebastian Mellor.

Although little Collin was delivered stillborn, he was safely cushioned by the pad as family members said their farewell in September of last year.

Sharing the story of their loss was difficult, as Alissa and Ryan read a letter they had prepared for the gathering.

For support, Christina Stamper was at



COURTESY OF ASHLEY JEFFERY/ADVENTHEALTH WEST FLORIDA DIVISION  
Amanda Maggard, president and CEO of AdventHealth Zephyrhills, left, accompanied family members of Collin Sebastian Mellor as the hospital received a CuddleCot donation on March 26. Next to the hospital executive is Alessandra Mellor, her parents Ryan and Alissa, sister Carolina, as well as grandparents Migdoel Rodriguez and Sonia Garcia.

the couple's side, and when they were overcome by emotion, she finished reading the letter on their behalf.

"Due to the CuddleCot, we were able to stay with our son in our room," Stamper read. "During the first few hours of absolute shock, there was no time, clarity to say, do, or express all that that you would like to."

Stamper could resonate with the parents' struggle as she, too, lost her daughter, who was delivered stillborn.

Through the pain, she and her husband founded Madison's Miracles - an organization named after their late daughter.

Its purpose is to offer support groups to parents who have lost an infant, as well as raise funds to help pay for funerals and pri-

ate counseling.

After discovering the CuddleCots - based in the United Kingdom - Stamper decided to have one brought to Florida.

"I needed to bring it here because nobody in the state had them," she recalled.

In October 2016, she donated the first one to the Martin Health System, the hospital in Stuart, Florida, where Madison was delivered.

She has since teamed up with Ryan and Alissa with the goal of donating six CuddleCots to various hospitals in the U.S., and Puerto Rico.

AdventHealth Zephyrhills was their first stop, with Stanford University and Tampa General Hospital as next destinations.



BRIAN FERNANDES

This CuddleCot device was donated to AdventHealth Zephyrhills in memory of Collin Sebastian Mellor on March 26.

Ryan is a cardiac surgeon at AdventHealth Tampa where he is acutely aware of the concept of mortality.

However, after he and his wife experienced the loss personally, they felt compelled to help others in need.

"We want to raise awareness that they're (CuddleCots) there," the doctor explained. "They should be available to people who are going through this."

Even with his busy schedule, he said he wants to be present when each hospital receives their gift.

As for the staff at AdventHealth Zephyrhills, they will be reminded of the priceless value of their gift, as it has been imprinted with Collin's full name.

Stamper stated that, "every family that walks through this door and has a loss, whether stillbirth or shortly after infant loss, will be guided by the arms open wide of Collin Sebastian."

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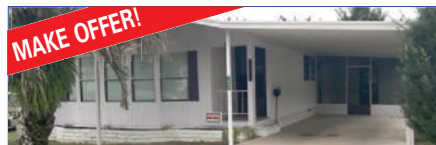
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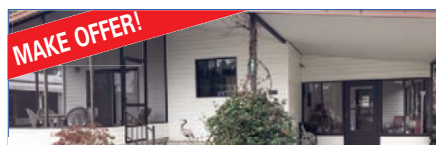
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# Culinary Excellence just off the Suncoast

One of the best restaurants in Pasco and north Hillsborough is in a place many would never expect — The Hilton Garden Inn in Lutz, located next to the Suncoast Parkway on State Road 54.

“People are always surprised by the outstanding food and service we offer here,” said Robert Scaffedi, who has been executive chef since the hotel opened two years ago.

“Everything we make is from scratch — the soups, sauces, stocks and desserts — both for our restaurant as well as our banquet foods,” said Scaffedi. “We have some of the most experienced and talented chefs in all of Tampa Bay, and our skills and passion are evident in everything we prepare and serve.”

Assisting Scaffedi in the kitchen are Sous Chef Jay Raskin, who has 26 years in food service, and Pastry Chef Luciano Visentin, who began his career in his native Italy over 35 years ago.

“We’re reversing the perception that mid-range hotels have just average food,” said Scaffedi. “Luciano’s pastries are off the charts, and Jay’s vast knowledge and energy are key to our success. We complement each other and have created a dream team in our kitchen.”

The restaurant’s name, The Garden Grille & Bar, is misleading because it offers extensive menus for breakfast and dinner. Plus, its holiday buffets are an epicurean dream that boast an extensive menu, especially considering its affordable family pricing.

The Hilton’s April 21st Easter Brunch is \$32.95 for adults, and even includes a complimentary mimosa.



This trio of chefs at the Hilton Garden Inn in Lutz has over 60 years of combined experience. Left to right: Sous Chef Jay Raskin, Executive Chef Robert Scaffedi and Pastry Chef Luciano Visentin.

Pricing for kids between 4 and 12 is just \$14.95. Just look at what’s on this festive buffet line.

Carving stations of Colorado Leg of Lamb with mint jelly, and Prime Sirloin with Rosemary infused Aujus. Spiral Ham with pineapple glaze, cherrywood bacon, sausage links, mashed and sweet potatoes, grits, made-to-order omelets and eggs, pancakes made on the spot, French toast, homemade muffins and pastries, cheese blintzes, four kinds of juice and coffee. The dessert table includes chocolate-dipped strawberries, guava-stuffed pannacotti, chocolate mouse with raspberries, and Italian cakes.

“Everything on our buffet is homemade,” said Scaffedi. “We take the time to make everything from scratch, so we know it is made right.”

The Hilton Garden Inn is serving its Easter Buffet from 11 a.m. to 2

p.m. Seatings are every half hour, and reservations are recommended.

You will also find exquisite offerings on the hotel’s dinner menu, including Fusilli Carbonara, 12 oz. Ribeye Steak, Sticky-Finger Ribs and Citrus Grilled Salmon Bowl.

Dinner is served from 5 to 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, and 5 to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

Pastry Chef Visentin makes all of his deserts, including Mason Jar Chocolate Fudge Cake, Caramel Apply Granny, New York-Style Cheesecake and Rockslide Brownie.

“We are very proud that our desserts are all homemade, and not ordered in from the outside,” said Visentin.

The daily Breakfast Buffet is also 100 percent from scratch, and includes eggs made to order, pancakes, French Toast, homemade muffins and pastries, grits, breakfast

potatoes, bacon and sausage. Plus, every day the chef creates a special hot item, such as corned beef, cheese blintzes and ham.

The Breakfast Buffet is just \$10.95 (\$5.95 for kids), and includes four kinds of juice and coffee. It is served 6 to 10 a.m. weekdays, and 6:30 to 10:30 a.m. on weekends. It is open to hotel guests and the public.

The hotel’s excellent food is one reason it is such a popular venue for weddings, baby and bridal showers, bar mitzvahs, Sweet 16 parties, and other family and business celebrations. The hotel can also provide custom decorations for theme parties and events.

“Our banquet facilities accommodate up to 275 people, and we have small private rooms for small groups, for as few as 20 people,” said Lei Rosasio, director of sales.

“We also are a popular venue for corporate and executive meetings, because we can provide excellent, high-end menus and superb customer service,” she adds.

Some of the exclusive meals Scaffedi’s team prepares for banquets include Benevento Chicken, Filet Mignon with Porcine Sauce, Chicken Saltimbocca and Grouper with Picante Sauce.

For Scaffedi and his team, it’s the variety of things they prepare in their kitchen that make them enjoy and appreciate their jobs at the Hilton Garden Inn.

“We love the variety of foods we get to prepare at the hotel,” said Scaffedi. “The compliments we get from our guests, and their surprise reaction that our food is so good, give us great pride and satisfaction.”

## EASTER BRUNCH \$32.95/Adults • \$14.95/ages 4-12

Enjoy a delicious fresh made breakfast buffet along with carving stations of Colorado leg of Lamb with Mint Jelly and Prime Sirloin with Rosemary infused Au jus prepared by our Executive Chef Robert Scaffedi.

To **RSVP** for Easter Buffet, call **813-491-4900**, or email **Thalia.Gonzalez@Hilton.com**

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# Pasco youth to perform in "Aladdin" musical

By Brian Fernandes  
bfernandes@lakerlutznews.com

Get ready to experience the theatrical version of an iconic film, as the New Tampa Players host the performance of "Aladdin Jr." In addition to being an adaptation of the motion picture "Aladdin," the play also draws from the Broadway musical.

The performances are set for April 5 at 8 p.m.; April 6 at 7 p.m.; and April 7 at 3 p.m. New Tampa Players has worked with the Penguin Project organization in casting youth with special needs for all the roles. These stars will also be accompanied on stage with peer mentors for support. Many of the actors, ranging from ages 7 to 24, will be representing the communities

of Lutz, Land O' Lakes and Wesley Chapel. Some performers from these areas will also play principal characters, including Jaden Figueroa as Aladdin and Zoe DeJoseph as Jasmine. The play will also be a musical, performing popular "Aladdin" songs, such as "Friend Like Me," "Prince Ali" and "A Whole New World." Each ticket can be purchased at a \$15 flat fee online or at the door on performance day. Proceeds benefit the New Tampa Players to help support future productions. The play will be held at the University Area Cultural Development Center on 14013 N. 22nd St., in Tampa. To purchase tickets online, visit [NewTampaPlayers.org](http://NewTampaPlayers.org). For additional information, contact Nora



COURTESY OF NEW TAMPA PLAYERS

Connor Olsen practices for his upcoming role as the Genie in 'Aladdin Jr.' The performance will take place at the University Area Cultural Development Center from April 5 to April 7.

Paine at (443) 850-8997 or at [President@NewTampaPlayers.org](mailto:President@NewTampaPlayers.org).

# Saint Leo offers new scholarship program

By Mary Rathman  
mrathman@lakerlutznews.com

Saint Leo University has launched a new scholarship program to make higher education more accessible to Catholic high school students in Florida.

Available for students beginning in the fall, the Catholic Promise Scholarship will award Florida students, who have attended four years at a Catholic high school, with an annual scholarship of \$14,000 toward their tuition at Saint Leo's University Campus. The scholarship will be renewable each

year, for up to four years — amounting to a cumulative total of up to \$56,000 in financial aid by the time the student graduates.

When combined with the Florida Effective Access to Student Education (EASE) grant of \$3,500 per year and an annual \$5,500 to \$7,500 in Stafford Loans, Saint Leo University's annual tuition will be significantly reduced for recipients of the Catholic Promise Scholarship every year.

"As the first of its kind in Saint Leo history, the Catholic Promise Scholarship will effectively bring the cost of a high-quality,

private, liberal arts education within the reach of many Catholic high school students across the state of Florida," said Dr. Senthil Kumar, Saint Leo University vice president for University Campus Admissions & Center for Global Engagement, in a release.

Students must meet the following requirements:

- Complete four years at a Catholic high school
- Have an unweighted 3.0 GPA
- Be a U.S. Citizen and Florida resident
- Attend Saint Leo at University Campus
- Live on campus all four years
- Maintain a 2.5 GPA and full-time status while earning a degree

This commitment to promoting accessibility and affordability of Catholic higher education demonstrates Saint Leo's Benedictine core values, both as an institution and pillar of the Catholic community, according to university officials.

Saint Leo University will host a Catholic Promise Scholarship Open House on April 7 from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., on its main campus, 33701 State Road 52 in St. Leo. Prospective students and their families, school counselors, and the public can attend, at no cost. Mass will be celebrated as part of the open house events at the Saint Leo Abbey Church at 10 a.m.

To register for the open house, call (352) 588-8283.

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# Election coming soon

By B.C. Manion

bomanion@lakerlutznews.com

Randy Maggard and David 'Mac' Macallister will face off in a primary on April 9 to determine who will represent the Republicans in a special election to fill the vacancy in District 38 House seat in the Florida Legislature.

The seat was vacated by Danny Burgess, who accepted an offer from Gov. Ron DeSantis to become the executive director of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Early voting for the special election began on March 30 and ends on April 6.

Only registered Republicans can vote in the special primary election, said Pasco County Supervisor of Elections Brian Corley. The district's boundaries stretch roughly from East Pasco over to U.S. 41 in Central Pasco.

Voters casting a ballot in that election have the option of voting early at the Central Pasco Government Center, 4111 Land O' Lakes Blvd., in Land O' Lakes, or at the East Pasco Government Center, 14236 Sixth St., in Dade City.

The early voting sites will be open during the week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on weekends from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The winner of the special primary election will face Democrat Kelly Smith in a general election for District 38 on June 18.

Besides the special election on April 9, there's also an election the same day for City Council Seat 1 in the City of Zephyrhills.

Manny Funes is facing Lance Smith for that seat. That election is open to all of Zephyrhills' electorate, regardless of party.

There are no early voting days in Zephyrhills.



Members of the GFWC New Tampa Junior Woman's Club proudly show off their Little Free Library now available to the general public at the New Tampa YMCA.



COURTESY OF RAEQUEL TOMSICH

## Club encourages a love for reading

By Mary Rathman

mrathman@lakerlutznews.com

The GFWC New Tampa Junior Woman's Club was looking for a way to support the GFWC Florida Director Project, 'Book Heroes,' and decided to make a Little Free Library, a "take a book, return a book" free book exchange, for the community.

Little Free Libraries are a global phenomenon. The small, book exchanges number more than 80,000 around the world in 91 countries, according to LittleFreeLibrary.org.

The woman's club found plans for the project and received a GFWC Focus on Literacy grant provided by Proctor &

Gamble Company, to help with expenses.

Armed with his woodworking knowledge, Mike Tomsich, the spouse of a club member, helped turn the club's vision into a reality by building the charming library.

In the meantime, the woman collected books for both adults and children and searched for a location for the library.

The New Tampa YMCA, at 16221 Compton Drive, agreed to allow the library to be placed on its property. On March 15, the GFWC New Tampa Junior Woman's Club Little Free Library, Charter No. 84210, was installed and is now open to the public.

The Little Free Library works on the honor system and anyone can contribute or

borrow books. Although the hope is that the community will actively add books to the library, the club is the steward of the library and will ensure that it is maintained, and will restock it, as necessary.

The library is registered and can be found at LittleFreeLibrary.org/ourmap/. The website is also the tool to find additional Little Free Library locations.

The New Tampa installment appears to be the first Little Free Library in the area that is open to the general public.

The club hopes that this library will encourage literacy and put books in the hands of those who might not otherwise have them at home.

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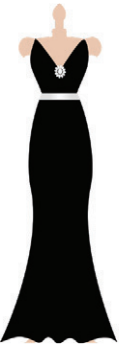
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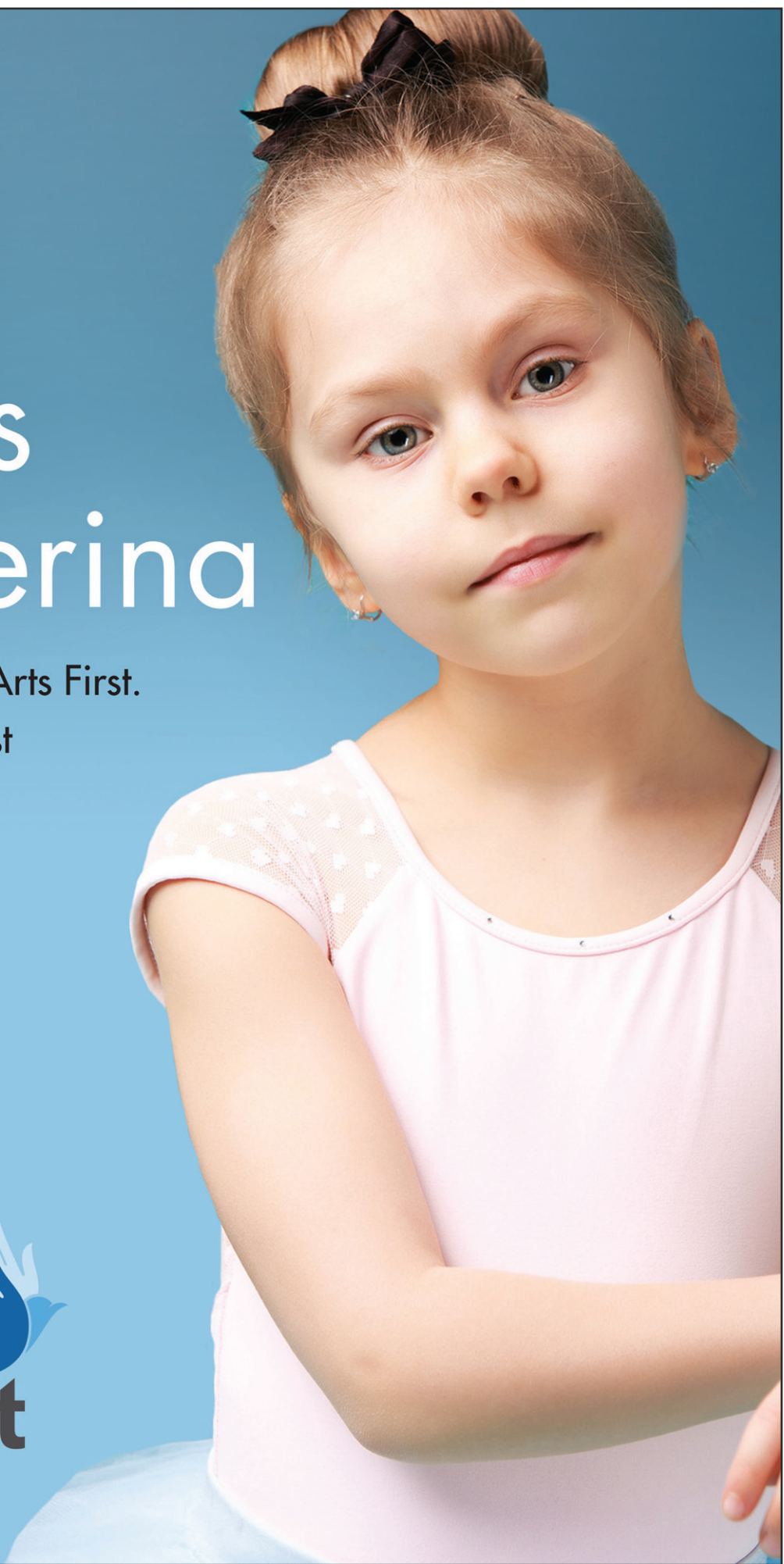
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# Closer Look

AN ADVERTISER PROFILE

## No Long Lines and Free Delivery

By William Jacko  
Special to The Laker / Lutz News

Land O' Lakes Pharmacy is a neighborhood pharmacy in the Wilderness Lakes plaza on U.S. 41 that offers local delivery, no long lines and a quiet environment for private consultations.

Its pharmacists are your advocate, and gladly call your doctor and health insurance company to gather information about your care.

"We have a lot of people who come in and say they're so glad we're local, and take the time to call their doctors and insurance company," said Pharmacist Carrie Heinz. "They appreciate our attentive service, especially in navigating the complicated intricacies of the medical and insurance businesses."

Land O' Lakes Pharmacy prides itself on taking the time to get information, and resolving a customer's problem, the same day, or as quickly as possible.

"A lot of people just don't understand what to ask for when they call the insurance company, so we'll do that for them," said Heinz.

Land O' Lakes Pharmacy works with the same major vendors as larger pharmacies and stocks a full range of major medications, as well as some specialty items. It also performs services like adult immunizations, medication flavoring and some compounding.

"Being small does not mean we can't get the same things for customers as large chains. Plus, we offer local delivery — something few chains do," said Heinz.

The pharmacy has recently started carrying CBD oil made from hemp, which is often confused with a similar product made from marijuana. It buys its CBD oil from a company that only sells to pharmacies, which guarantees its quality.



"Because it is made from hemp, we are allowed to sell CBD oil in the store," said Heinz. "It is used to help relieve pain, and also helps with stress and sleep. It can be a good alternative to using prescriptions or over-the-counter pain relievers."

Over-the-counter medications stocked at Land O' lakes Pharmacy include remedies for coughs and cold, stomach issues and allergies. It also carries a full line of vitamins, minerals and supplements, and stocks cold packs, blood pressure monitors, humidifiers, health and beauty aids, and some household products.

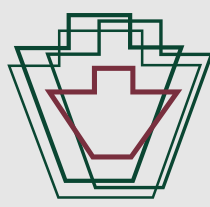
Heinz likes her job for the personal connection she makes with her customers, and the communal feeling she receives working at a small, independent pharmacy.

"I feel connected to this store and our customers, who really appreciate that you know them personally and remember something about them. This makes it very comfortable for customers to ask questions," said Heinz.

Land O' Lakes Pharmacy accepts most major insurance coverage, including coverage from companies owned by other pharmacies. For more information, call (813) 803-7303, or drop by the store and introduce yourself to a pharmacist who is part of your community.

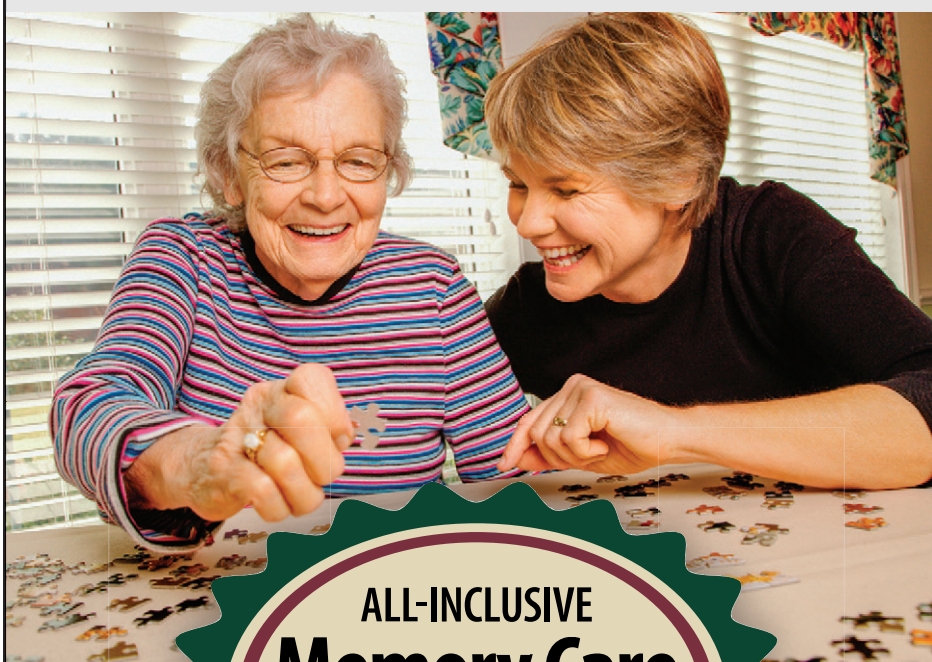
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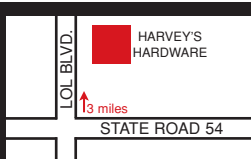
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- Newborn Care Class: April 17 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
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Reservations are required by calling (727) 834-5630, or online at [MedicalCenterTrinity.com](http://MedicalCenterTrinity.com).

## MEET-AND-GREET

Access Health Care will host a meet-and-greet for Dr. Olakunle Ajibola, board certified by the American Board of Family Medicine, April 4 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., at 7633 Cita Lane in New Port Richey. There will be light refreshments. For information or to RSVP, call (352) 616-0698.

## BREAST-FEEDING CLASS

St. Joseph's Hospital-North, 4211 Van Dyke Road in Lutz, will host a breast-feeding class on April 7 from 9 a.m. to noon, in Garden Classroom A, for expectant mothers and a support person.

Topics will include latching and positioning, benefits of immediate skin-to-skin contact, newborn hunger signs, tips for returning to work, breast-feeding lifestyles, and when to call a health care provider or lactation consultant for help. The cost is \$25. To register, call (813) 443-2046.

## BREAST CANCER INFO

AdventHealth Wesley Chapel will offer a breast health series, including a seminar on breast cancer screening, April 8 at 5:30 p.m., at Inspiration Place, Wellness Plaza, Suite 305, third floor, 2700 Healing Way. Dr. Nicole Figueredo, breast surgery, will review current breast cancer screening recommendations, new technology and the interpretation of mammograms. Reservations are required by calling (813) 929-5432 or online at [AHWesleyChapel.com/Events](http://AHWesleyChapel.com/Events).

## DIABETES EDUCATION

Access Health Care Physicians, 5382 Spring Hill Drive in Spring Hill, will present a lecture entitled, "Know Your Numbers," April 8 at 1 p.m., as part of its Diabetic Teaching & Support Education Series. Reservations are required by calling (352) 200-2190.

## INFANT CPR

AdventHealth Zephyrhills, 7050 Gall Blvd., will offer the Family and Friends program for infant CPR and choking on April 8

from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., in the Cypress Room, off the main lobby.

The American Heart Association class is for expectant parents to learn hands-on CPR and choking rescue.

This is not a certification or credential course.

Admission is free for patients who will be delivering at AdventHealth Zephyrhills.

For information, email Sonia Yaksich at [Sonia.yaksich@adventhealth.com](mailto:Sonia.yaksich@adventhealth.com).

## JOINT REPLACEMENT

St. Joseph's Hospital-North, 4211 Van Dyke Road in Lutz, will offer free lectures on total joint replacement on April 8, April 15, April 22 and April 29 at 11 a.m., in the Nursing Administration classroom.

Participants can increase their knowledge of total joint replacement, prepare for surgery, and become familiar with the recovery process.

Based on requirements from the physician and availability, pre-op testing could be done the same day.

To register, call (813) 443-2046.

## CHRONIC PAIN

Oak Hill Hospital will offer a symposium entitled, "The Latest Treatments for Chronic Pain of the Shoulders, Elbows, Feet & Ankles" on April 9 from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m., at the Silverthorn Country Club, 4550 Golf Club Lane in Brooksville.

The guest speakers will be Dr. Dragomir Mijic, specializing in shoulders, elbows and

general orthopedics; and, Dr. Dolfi Herscovici Jr., fellowship-trained foot and ankle specialist.

Both doctors will discuss what surgical, nonsurgical treatments are available, as well as minimally invasive surgical treatments.

A question-and-answer session will follow.

A complimentary hot meal will be served.

Reservations are required by calling (352) 597-6333.

## STRESS LECTURE

AdventHealth Wesley Chapel will offer a lecture on stress April 10 at 6:30 p.m., in the Wellness Center Conference Room, second floor, 2700 Healing Way.

Dr. Barbara Morris will discuss the importance of achieving the right stress balance and how to manage stress with everyday activities.

Reservations are required by calling (813) 929-5432.


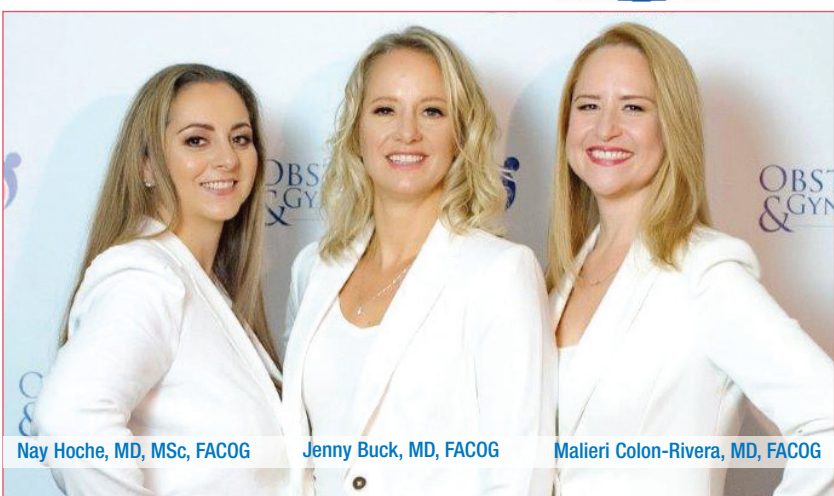
## MEDICARE BASICS

The Arthenia L. Joyner University Area Community Library, 13619 N. 22nd St., in Tampa, will offer a seminar on Medicare basics April 10 at 10:30 a.m.

There will be an overview of Medicare, including parts A, B, C (Advantage), and D, as well as Medicare Supplement Insurance (Medigap).

For information, call (813) 273-3652.

Continued on next page

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### HEALTH SURVEY

The Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough, Pasco, Pinellas and Pasco counties are partnering with local area hospitals on a comprehensive survey to better understand and address the health needs of communities in the Greater Tampa Bay area.

The 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment collects data from residents on nutrition, physical activity, access to care, and mental health.

The survey for Pasco County residents is available in English at [bit.ly/pascohealth](http://bit.ly/pascohealth), or in Spanish at [bit.ly/pascohealthSpanish](http://bit.ly/pascohealthSpanish).

A link to the survey also is available on participating county health department websites.

Residents can access the survey through April 21.

### NAMI SUPPORT GROUPS

NAMI Pasco County (National Alliance on Mental Illness) offers support groups for families and those with a psychiatric diagnosis.

• NAMI Connection: every Wednesday from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., at the WellCare Office, 5113 U.S. 19 in New Port Richey

• NAMI Family Support: the second and fourth Monday of the month, from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., at the Medical Center of Trinity, 5637 Marine Parkway in New Port Richey

• NAMI Family Support: the first and third Tuesday of the month, from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., at Atonement Lutheran Church, 29617 State Road 54 in Wesley Chapel

Education classes offered by NAMI are free, but registration is required. These include:

• Peer-to-Peer: an eight-session educational program for adults with mental illness

• Family-to-Family: a 12-session educational program for family, significant others

and friends of people living with mental illness

These classes include presentations, discussions and interactive exercises.

For more information, call (727) 992-9653.

### HOSPITAL TO TEST FOOTWEAR SANITIZING STATIONS

AdventHealth Connerton will be the first specialty acute care facility in the nation to test the PathO3Gen Solutions Footwear Sanitizing Stations to maximize infection control for patients and their families.

The patented, new technology uses proactive Solestice 3/15 Technology to kill superbugs, such as MRSA and C. difficile, which can be transmitted from the bottoms of shoes to patients, staff and visitors.

Within 6 seconds of stepping onto the station, a person's shoes are decontaminated, decreasing the spread of infectious illness.

Nine of the innovative stations will be tested throughout the facility.

AdventHealth Connerton is partnering with Green Earth Medical Solutions in St. Petersburg to bring this one-of-a-kind technology to the facility.

### STRENGTH & BALANCE

Silver Sneakers Flex Strength & Balance classes take place Wednesdays at 9 a.m., and Fridays at 10:30 a.m., at The Groves Golf and Country Club in Land O' Lakes.

These are low-impact classes for men and women designed to improve flexibility and balance, which can help prevent falls, broken hips and more.

Admission is free for Silver Sneakers members and \$5 per session for non-members.

For information, contact Tom Marbell at (352) 409-2984.



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Thank you to Suncoast MOPAR and the Christian Hot Rod Association for coordinating the car show. Profits benefit AAU Basketball.



# Chalk Talk

Send school news to [news@lakerlutznews.com](mailto:news@lakerlutznews.com)

## FINANCIAL LITERACY EXPOS

Pasco County Schools, along with various partners, will present a Financial Literacy Expo on April 4 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., at Wesley Chapel High School, 30651 Wells Road.

Participants can learn about creating a financial plan, college funding/financial aid, planning for retirement, legal documents to protect your family, and more.

Register at [Pasco.k12.fl.us/oll/financial\\_literacy/](http://Pasco.k12.fl.us/oll/financial_literacy/).

## MAGNET APPLICATIONS

Pasco County Schools will accept magnet applications during the second Pasco Pathways open enrollment period through April 5.

Seats are still available at specific grade levels for the following schools and programs:

- Wendell Krinn Technical High School
- Pasco High School Cambridge International
- Pasco Middle School Cambridge International
- San Antonio Elementary Cambridge International

For information or to apply, visit [Pasco.k12.fl.us/ed\\_choice](http://Pasco.k12.fl.us/ed_choice).

## MOBILE DENTAL SERVICES

The Department of Health Pasco County is partnering with the Pasco County School Board to provide preventive dental services for students in Title 1 schools in Pasco County.

The dental bus will travel to selected schools to give dental assessments, sealants, fluoride varnish, and education for the students.

School schedules for the East side of Pasco County are as follows:

- April 8 to April 11: Chester Taylor Elementary
- April 15 to April 18: Woodland Elementary
- April 22 to April 25: Centennial Elementary
- April 29 to May 2: West Zephyrhills Elementary
- May 6 to May 9: San Antonio Elementary
- May 13 to May 16: Quail Hollow Elementary
- May 20 to May 23: Lacochee Elementary

In order for a child to be seen on the bus, the required forms must be completed and signed by a parent or guardian.

For more information, visit [Pasco.FloridaHealth.gov](http://Pasco.FloridaHealth.gov) and click on "Smile Care A Van."

## CLASS REUNION

Hillsborough High School's 65th Class of 1954 Reunion will take place April 27 from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., at the Land O' Lakes Recreation Complex, 3032 Collier Parkway in Land O' Lakes, indoors.

The cost is \$5 at the door, and includes a catered chicken and pork barbecue lunch.

For information and to RSVP by April 15, email Bob Carpenter at [Bob.TT.Carp@gmail.com](mailto:Bob.TT.Carp@gmail.com), or call Maxine Smith Law at (813) 996-4860.

## COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

Hillsborough County Social Services, in partnership with the Community Action Board, is accepting applications for its annual Community Action Board Scholarship



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## Officers make a difference

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tampa Bay would like to thank the Dade City Police Department for dedicating its time and effort to the 'Littles' at Rodney B. Cox Elementary in Dade City. The officers embody the mission of BBBS perfectly, which is to provide children facing adversity with professionally supported, one-to-one mentoring relationships that will change their lives for the better. Their devotion to serving the community and enthusiasm for their 'Littles' has not gone unnoticed.

program that assists with post-secondary education tuition.

The scholarships, worth up to \$5,000, are awarded to students to help alleviate some of the financial burden college tuition creates.

Candidates must be between 16 and 24 years old, and have a high school diploma or GED equivalent (16-year-olds can apply if they are a graduating senior); must have a minimum GPA of 2.5; must reside in Hillsborough County; and, must have a household income that falls within 125 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

The deadline to apply is April 15. For more information, call (813) 301-7341.

## VOCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS

Students in east Pasco County who plan to attend vocational schools will have the opportunity for financial assistance through six new scholarships as Wade and Dianna Thomas, of The Thomas Promise Foundation, introduce the Atkins Vocational Scholarship Program.

Funded by the couple and an anonymous donor, the program will provide

\$1,000 scholarships to three students each in Zephyrhills High School and Pasco High School.

Students must be accepted to a vocational school.

Applications are accessible in the guidance offices of the schools and, in the future, can be found on the Pasco Education Foundation website.

For more information, students should contact Mignon Edwards at Pasco High or April Simons at Zephyrhills High.

## FREE PROM DRESSES

Belle of the Ball will once again offer free prom dresses and accessories April 6 and April 13 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., to in-need high school girls. The 'boutique' shop is at 1210 Holt Ave., in Clearwater.

Dresses will be available for prom, homecoming and military balls. No referral letter is necessary and no appointment is needed.

A \$1 to \$5 donation will be accepted, but is not required.

For more information, visit [BelleOfTheBallProject.com](http://BelleOfTheBallProject.com), or visit Tampa Bay Area Belle of the Ball on Facebook.

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**Good Friday – April 19 at 7:00 p.m.**  
**Easter Sunday – April 21 at 8:00 a.m.**  
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## TOURISM, from page 1A

County drove in: Nearly 91 percent reported that's how they arrived. Seven percent said they flew into Tampa International Airport.

Top reasons for visiting Pasco County were: Visiting friends or family, special events, attractions, relaxation, vacation and outdoor activities.

Ninety-eight percent of visitors said they will return to Pasco County.

Adam Thomas, Pasco County's tourism director, briefed the Pasco County Commission on some of the report's findings during a recent meeting.

"We're a job generator," Thomas said. "In 2018, we generated over 7,480 jobs that are supported by tourism that created wages of over \$156 million on an annual basis."

Pasco County Commissioner Jack Mariano was impressed by the report's findings.

"I think you've got some awesome information in there," Mariano said.

"The average vacationer is 44," Mariano said. "The median household is \$75,000. Twenty-six percent travel with children."

When visitors are asked to identify additional activities that they would like to see, they identified more outdoor activities, more family friendly activities, a water park, a music festival, more shopping options and more restaurants, Mariano said.

Pasco County Commissioner Mike Moore said the impact from tourism is already impressive, but he said it will increase, as the county's new tourism brand — Florida's Sports Coast — takes hold.

"When the Wiregrass Sports Complex is finished, you can imagine how those numbers are going to increase," he said.

Moore noted that AdventHealth Center Ice — which was used as a practice facility by the U.S. Olympic Women's Ice Hockey Team — already attracts big events.

Over the weekend, the ice arena hosted the 2019 Disabled Hockey Festival, and will host more games this coming weekend.

## Tourism's impact on Pasco County

Overall economic impact: **\$615 million**

Visitors to Pasco: **965,000**

Room nights by visitors: **1,132,926**

Jobs: **7,480**

Wages: **\$156 million**

Source: 2018 Economic Impact Study of Tourism in Pasco County

The ice arena is the first in Florida to host the hockey festival, Moore said, via comments shared with The Laker/Lutz News by his aide, Andy Taylor.

"I am honored to participate in an event that shows anybody can participate and be included. I thank USA Hockey for their commitment to the disabled community and coming to Wesley Chapel," Moore added.

Thomas said the event is generating nearly 1,200 room nights.

The tourism director told commissioners the county is working on a different event that's expected to generate close to 1,400 room nights.

Moore told his board colleagues, "The focus is the room nights because if they're spending a night in a hotel, they're going out to dinner, they're buying their gas here, they're going to the shops. They're doing everything in Pasco County."

Now, as the county negotiates future events, Moore said, "the stipulations are, they stay in Pasco County."

Thomas described the county's tourism approach this way: "We're going after the active family, the active couple, the active traveler that's looking for outdoor adventure, but also looking for the youth tournaments."

## DOCK, from page 1A

had been forced to work in Hillsborough County because of Pasco's ban.

The owners of Ukulele Brand's restaurant, in Land O' Lakes, also can proceed if they want to replace their waterfront dock without having to worry about whether they can replace the roof.

County Commissioner Mike Moore made the motion to amend the county ordinance to remove the restriction, seconded by Commissioner Kathryn Starkey.

"I've been in office since 2014," Moore said, noting that's pretty much how long he's been working with people in Lutz and Land O' Lakes who wanted to put roofs on their docks.

"I have not had one person on a lake in that area say they're against it, so I would obviously like to see this move forward," Moore said. "It doesn't impede the neighbors' views at all."

But, commissioners are split on whether waterfront property owners in coastal communities should be allowed to put roofs over their docks.

Some waterfront property owners asked commissioners to allow them to have roofs over their docks, to protect their boats.

"Most people have a significant investment that is sitting behind them on their waterfront property and they would like to have a dock to protect their vessel," said Nicholas Mudry, who lives at 5415 JoBeth Drive in Gulf Landings, in New Port Richey. Some vessels cost in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, he said.

Jeromy Gamble, 7309 Islander Lane in Sea Pines in Hudson, said he owns Coastline Boatlift Covers.

"Since the beginning of the year, we've sold over \$100,000 worth of boatlift covers in Pasco County. I've got 78 people who want to order boatlift covers, right now. There's a massive demand.

"People all over Pasco County on the waterfront — fresh and saltwater — want to be able to protect their investments. As new people move into the waterfront communities — both fresh and salt, they're investing in their dream of living on the water. Part of that is owning a vessel. We offer a solution that doesn't block the neighbors' views. It has a removable top. It does not impede the boatlift whatsoever. It's a clamp-on design," he said.

"There are ways to solve this problem, if

looked at properly," he added.

But, Skip Geiger, director of public relations for the Gulf Harbors Civic Association, urged commissioners to keep the prohibition intact.

"Gulf Harbors prohibits covered docks, covered boatlifts and other covered structures on the water," he said.

"This ordinance was originally passed to ensure that no hazards to navigation are constructed along the canals, that would interfere with the boaters' view of the canals and docks, and allow a mix of boats, of all sizes, from kayaks to baby yachts to operate and remain clear of each other," he said.

He told commissioners he doesn't object to dock roofs on lakes. But, he went on: "What we do have a problem with is slipping in any sort of covered docks in that area again. It's a safety hazard, it's an issue not only for views but for safety of residents, and we do not want it."

Commissioner Starkey, who lives in Gulf Harbors and is also a boat owner, opposes allowing dock roofs in coastal communities.

"We don't want a roof. My neighbors don't want a roof. The majority of folks there don't want a roof. We don't want our views to be impeded.

"You can put a cover on your boat. I do a lot of boating on the East Coast of Florida. Those are very, very expensive boats and there are no roofs," she said.

County Commissioner Jack Mariano asked County Attorney Jeff Steinsnyder if the county could allow the roofs in some communities, but allow other communities to use deed restrictions to ban them.

Steinsnyder responded: "If you're going to allow it, you're going to have to allow it along the entire Gulf front. Your land development regulation needs to treat everybody the same."

"You can't carve out neighborhoods that are similar in fashion."

Ultimately, the board agreed to lift the ban on lakefront properties, and to have a workshop regarding the issue in coastal communities. That workshop is expected in May.

On a related issues, the board approved changes to county regulations that include docks and seawalls in building permit requirements, require maintenances of docks and seawalls; and provides a provision for when the county can make repairs when the condition of the dock or seawall presents a threat to public safety.



Gloria Dale and Rosie Heim worked a booth at Land O' Lakes Music Festival in 2017, as Heim made an effort to drum up support for her bid to become the new Honorary Mayor of Land O' Lakes. Dale is the deputy honorary mayor, a title she's been given for life.

## ROSIE, from page 1A

Laker/Lutz News she wanted the GFWC Lutz-Land O' Lakes Woman's club to become "a household name in Land O' Lakes."

Pat Serio, a member of the woman's club, considered Rosie to be a dear friend.

"We've worked together on more projects and issues than I could possibly count," Serio said.

She had a "unique insight and fun personality," Serio added, and "she loved glitz and glamour."

"All our (club members) hearts are very heavy with our loss of this wonderful woman after her very valiant battle with cancer," she added.

In Rosie's quest to win the Land O' Lakes title, she hosted eight events.

For Rosie, it was never about being a member of a particular clique — she believed in reaching out to everyone.

She was involved with Women-N-Charge, a women's networking group. She was also involved with AARP and with other groups.

She was always looking to recruit more members to the woman's club because she saw a need to help with community services.

She also saw the need to develop reinforcements, as members of the woman's club grow older and are unable to do as much volunteering as they did in the past.

In a previous interview, she explained: "Not all of the ladies are physically able to move tables and set up crafts. We would love younger people with better backs."

She also was a cheerleader for the Central Pasco Chamber, too.

She looked forward to presiding at ribbon cuttings and representing the chamber in the Lutz Fourth of July Parade.

Before she retired, she was a special needs school assistant at Denham Oaks Elementary.

Elayne Bassinger, who was Rosie's friend for 15 years, but particularly close to her during the last five years, said Rosie's passing has left a hole in her heart.

"She had a remarkable, caring, giving, dynamic spirit — with a bit of spitfire thrown in," Bassinger said.

"She was an inspiration to those who were fortunate enough to know her, and I was blessed to call her my friend," Bassinger added.

Rosie possessed a can-do spirit and a great sense of humor, Bassinger said.

"Her heart was true community service," Bassinger said.

Rosie enjoyed being involved, and was thrilled when some of that goodwill was returned during a pasta dinner fundraiser she held when she was campaigning to become honorary mayor.

She described the pasta dinner, in a 2017 interview. Ninety-six people turned out.

"I was just so honored and overwhelmed by the love shown in that room," she said. "They were chanting my name, 'Rosie, Rosie.'"

It was incredible, she recalled.

"When you give, it's always returned to you 10-fold," she said.

Rosie is survived by her husband, Charlie; her son, Daniel; her daughters, Sharon and Dawn, and her grandchildren.

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## New Tampa teen's javelin throw among nation's best

By Kevin Weiss

kweiss@lakerlutznews.com

As a kicker on the Wharton High School varsity football team and a defender on the varsity boys soccer team, Zach Godbold relies on his legs quite a bit.

But, it's his right arm and throwing ability, that could take him furthest in his athletic endeavors.

The 17-year-old New Tampa resident happens to be one of the nation's top high school javelin throwers, as a junior on the Wharton varsity track and field team.

At an AAU meet last month in Fort Lauderdale, Godbold recorded a javelin throw of 191 feet, which, for a short period, ranked No. 1 nationally for junior athletes 18 years old and under.

While the mark has since been surpassed, it still ranks among the top 10 throws nationally — and tops in Florida.

"He's by far the No. 1 in the state," Wharton track and field coach Kyle LoJacono said.

The feat earned Godbold a coveted spot at the annual New Balance National Outdoor meet, regarded as the most prestigious post-season track and field championships for high school athletes. The meet, set for June in Greensboro, North Carolina, showcases more than 2,900 of America's elite and emerging high school talent.

Not one to regularly look up his national ranking, Godbold couldn't help himself following his recent performance in South Florida.

"I actually hadn't been looking at the national rankings at all," he said, "but then, after I threw that one and it felt really good, I went and looked it up, and I was very happy, obviously."

Godbold isn't settling with his current mark, though. He said he wants to surpass 210 feet in the javelin by the end of the year.

"I was very excited with my throw this year because it's so early in the season, that later on I'm hoping to improve on that, obviously," Godbold said.



COURTESY OF KYLE LOJACONO

New Tampa teen Zach Godbold is ranked among the nation's top high school javelin throwers. The 17-year-old Wharton High School junior's best mark so far this season is 191 feet.

### JAVELIN COMES NATURALLY

Success in javelin is not foreign to Godbold, since taking up the discipline about six years ago.

When he was 12 years old, he finished second overall in javelin for his age division at the 2014 AAU Junior Olympics Track and Field meet in Des Moines, Iowa.

Over the years, he's gone on to finish among the top performers multiple times for his age bracket in the Junior Olympics championships, including earning a gold medal as a 14-year-old when the meet was in Houston, Texas.

Godbold also competes in the shotput and discus.

Like javelin, he took up the throwing events after growing tired of always running in track and field, which he did mainly to stay in shape for football season.

"I really didn't want to run anymore," Godbold said, "so I just tried all three of the throwing events."

Javelin has come most natural to Godbold, as a multi-sport athlete with a

background in baseball and football.

He explained: "I've always been playing sports where I have to like throw a ball. I always played baseball, football — I was the backup quarterback for like Hail Marys — so I've always just been like throwing something and it just translates, like having a strong arm."

"It was something that just translated to me really well," he said.

Javelin, however, takes more than throwing ability to master, said Godbold, who stands at 6 feet and 190 pounds.

As "probably the most technical" of all throwing events in track and field, Godbold noted javelin requires power and strength from the lower body.

Godbold practices his throws about two or three times per week. The rest of the time is dedicated to quick sprints and medicine ball work, as opposed to lifting heavy weights.

"It's more like throwing with your legs than your arms, despite what people think. It's about more running and working with your legs and stuff," he said.

### LOFTY GOALS AHEAD

Godbold's javelin performances of late have drawn the attention of major college track and field programs.

He's received interest from the likes of Florida, Florida State, Cornell and Stanford universities, among others.

"I'm definitely trying to make the Division I level," Godbold said.

The 2024 Olympics is also on his long-term radar: "That would definitely be a goal of mine, to compete for the U.S.," he said.

More immediately, Godbold is looking to make history at the FHSAA (Florida High School Athletic Association) track and field meet over the next two years.

The FHSAA, for the first time ever, will crown an individual champion in the javelin as a provisional event, after it's been an exhibition event each of the last two years.

However, the javelin throw won't accumulate points toward team scores until the 2020 season when it officially becomes the FHSAA's 18th sanctioned track and field event.

"My goal is to win states," Godbold said, "and then hopefully next year, when it's an official event, do the same and score points."

Meantime, the prospect of finally being able to benefit from the elite javelin thrower has Wharton coaches excited.

"It'll be huge," LoJacono said, noting the track team would've won a recent divisional meet had Godbold's javelin throws counted toward scoring.

It also has the team gearing up for the event sooner than other area schools, said longtime Wharton throws coach Wes Newton.

Said Newton, "Because we have Zach, and because they're (the FHSAA) going to put the javelin in, we started the javelin much earlier than most everybody else, and so, no school in this county does what we do, because we have him."

Newton also said Godbold's presence in the javelin has led to several other Wharton athletes taking up the throwing event.

"We have four guys that throw the javelin and about five girls that throw the javelin," Newton said. "No other school has that."



### JOE KIEFER GOLF TOURNEY

The 34th annual Joe Kiefer Golf Tournament is set for April 5, at Lake Jovita Golf & Country Club, 12900 Lake Jovita Blvd., in Dade City.

Day-of registration begins at 11 a.m., with a 1 p.m. shotgun start.

Participants receive 18 holes of golf with cart provided, lunch, dinner, drinks and prizes.

Cost is \$125 per player.

Super ticket and sponsorship packages are also available.

For information and to register, call (352) 567-3769, or visit DadeCityChamber.com.

### FREE YOUTH FISHING DERBY

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is hosting a free youth fishing derby on April 6 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Tenoroc Public Use Area and Youth Conservation Center in Lakeland.

This special event will be conducted on Derby Lake, a 17-acre former phosphate pit stocked with a variety of freshwater sport fish and catfish. The lake has three fishing piers and a 200-foot boardwalk that is wheelchair accessible.

There will be a casting contest and a number of other outdoor activities for youth.

Bait and a limited number of loaner rods and reels will be provided free of charge to youth ages 15 and younger. A parent or guardian must accompany youth participants, but a fishing license is not required. Anglers over the age of 15 are also welcome to enjoy this fishing opportunity, but must supply their own bait and tackle.

Free lunch will be provided by Publix Super Markets and prepared by McKeel Academy of Technology's fishing team.

Preregistration is required for the derby and ends April 5.

To preregister, call the FWC at (863) 648-

3200 Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

For more information, visit MyFWC.com.

### PROJECT PATRIOTISM GOLF TOURNAMENT

The third annual Project Patriotism Golf Tournament is set for April 6 at Tampa Bay Golf & Country Club, 10641 Old Tampa Bay Drive in San Antonio.

Registration begins at 7:30 a.m., with a shotgun start at 8:30 a.m.

Cost is \$65, and includes lunch, silent auction and 50/50 raffle.

All proceeds will benefit the Zephyrhills JROTC.

For information, contact Jen Wedge at (813) 323-8034 or jen\_wedge@yahoo.com.

### NAMI 5K SET FOR APRIL 13

The NAMI (National Alliance of Mental Illness) 5K Run, Walk or Roll is set for April 13 at 8:30 a.m., at the Pasco-Hernando State College North Campus, 11415 Ponce de Leon Blvd., in Brooksville.

Cost is \$25 for the public and \$15 for students. The race is free for children under 12 years old.

Proceeds benefit NAMI on campus and NAMI of Hernando County. Register online at Active.com. For more information, call Dr. Eddie Williams at (352) 251-8899.

### OASIS GOLF TOURNAMENT

Oasis Pregnancy Centers will host its 10th annual Golf Fore Life golf tournament on April 27 at Plantation Palms Golf Club, 23253 Plantation Palms Blvd., in Land O' Lakes.

The event includes a continental breakfast, buffet lunch, contests, awards to top teams, and a one-week cabin vacation in North Carolina as a prize drawing. The tournament begins with an 8:30 a.m. shotgun start.

All proceeds from the event will benefit Oasis Pregnancy Care Centers in Pasco County. Sponsorships are also available.

For information, call (813) 406-4965.

### JOE CAPITANO GOLF CLASSIC

The 18th annual Joe Capitano Sr. Golf Classic is set for May 6, at Tampa Palms Golf

## LOCAL COMMITMENTS



COURTESY OF TAMPA CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

### JACKSON ECKLEY

The Saint Leo University men's soccer team landed a verbal commitment from Tampa Catholic High School senior goalkeeper Jackson Eckley. This past season, the 6-foot-2 Eckley posted a 1.095 goals against average and 130 saves, with a 9-3 record and eight shutouts. In his high school career, Eckley started 63 games as a four-year letterman and two-time captain, also helping the Crusaders to multiple regional tournament appearances.



COURTESY OF GAITHER HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS

### CHANCE COLEMAN

Gaither High junior linebacker/defensive end Chance Coleman verbally committed to play collegiate football at Division I FBS University of South Florida. The 6-foot-2, 205-pound Coleman posted 71 tackles and 10 sacks in 2018. He also holds Division I FBS scholarship offers from Cincinnati, Colorado State, Florida Atlantic and Liberty universities, among others.

& Country Club, 5811 Tampa Palms Blvd., in Tampa.

The tournament begins with a shotgun start at 7 a.m.

Individual players will be assigned as part of a foursome. Registration includes a luncheon, greens fees and cart fees.

Proceeds from the event benefit St. Peter Claver Catholic School.

For information, call (813) 224-0865, or email Development@SPCCS.org.

### SWIM ACROSS AMERICA

The annual Swim Across America open water swim competition returns to Tampa Bay, with an event on May 11 at North Shore Park, 901 North Shore Dr., N.E., in St. Petersburg.

The event, which runs from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m., will include half-mile, one-mile and 2-mile swims, plus a "Dolphin Dash" for less-experienced swimmers under 10 years old. Proceeds from the event will benefit cancer care and research at Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital and Moffitt Cancer Center.

In addition to the swims, the event will have live music, food trucks, tattoo tents, raffle items, and stories from cancer survivors and physicians.

Participants may swim individually or as part of a team to honor friends or family touched by cancer; captains are needed to form teams and raise money.

For more information, visit SwimCrossAmerica.org/tampabay.

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## Florida Aquarium showcases wildlife in a fun way



### Worth the Trip

By Brian Fernandes  
bfernandes@lakerlutznews.com

The diverse beauty of sea life can be marveled up-close when visiting The Florida Aquarium.

Since its opening in 1995, the Downtown Tampa attraction has given tourists a glimpse into the aquatic world, while offering them a chance to learn and have fun at the same time.

The venue attracts 800,000 visitors annually.

"The aquarium is set up to take you on a water journey," explained Brian Gallaher, digital media manager at the aquarium. "We want to educate, inspire and entertain all at the same time."

Home to an estimated 8,000 plant and animal species, the facility is divided into seven main galleries:

- Wetlands Trail
- Journey to Madagascar
- Bays and Beaches
- No Bones Zone
- Coral Reef
- Dragons Down Under
- Waves of Wonder

Native Floridian wildlife can be explored while strolling through the Wetlands Trail.

"A lot of animals here are rescues, especially the birds," Gallaher said.

One such bird is the Great Blue Heron in the trail's Mangrove Forest.

The aquarium serves as a rehabilitation center for animals such as one heron who was transferred from an animal sanctuary after suffering an injured wing.

The furry North American river otters can also be spotted above water. During winter season, kids can interact with them in an open area layered with snow to provide even more fun.

A White Gar shark, with its protruding teeth, as well as the red drum and snook fish, also can be viewed, too.

If visitors hear a rustling in the leaves, perhaps it's the spotted Burmese python, slithering from limb to limb.

While the python is not native to the Sunshine State, it has adapted and thrived, growing as long as 13 feet.

For those looking for a sample of African wildlife, check out the aquarium's Journey to Madagascar. That offers a glimpse of animals that are indigenous to the region.

Geckos, reef fish and giant clams can be viewed in that gallery.

And, if you've never heard a cockroach hiss before, you'll have your opportunity here.

This gallery also brings awareness to such endangered species as lemurs, radiated tortoises - and even coral reefs.

"Coral is an animal," Gallaher explained. "A lot of people don't realize that."

A small-scale nursery houses diverse coral, which are threatened by pollution and rising water temperatures in their native seas.

The No. 1 priority there is to provide a safe environment to allow the reproduction of more coral - which eventually will be integrated back into the wild.

The Bays and Beaches area is home to one of the aquarium's eldest members - Cleatus, the Goliath grouper.

His namesake serves him well: He is 5-foot-10 and weighs nearly 300 pounds.

And, Cleatus is still growing, Gallaher said.

Other expert swimmers found in this gallery include stingrays, spiny lobsters and upside down jellyfish, to name a few.

More colorful marine life with elongated, prickly bodies can be found in the No Bone Zone.



COURTESY OF THE FLORIDA AQUARIUM

Why observe wildlife from outside the tank, when you can swim alongside it? The Florida Aquarium grants tourists the chance to get a more up-close view of the sea's inhabitants.



COURTESY OF THE FLORIDA AQUARIUM

Roger Germann, president and CEO of The Florida Aquarium, is all about educating the public on aquatic life with lots of exciting activities.



BRIAN FERNANDES

The Florida Aquarium's Mosaic Center features an array of bird portraits by photographer Jim Gray. Here a roseate spoonbill is seen ascending from a pond in Sarasota.

Often associated with clownfish, sea anemones can be mesmerizing to watch — as their numerous tentacles float about.

Diverse color also illuminates the water with the presence of sea cucumbers, sea urchins and sea stars.

In addition to more turtles and stingrays, the Coral Reef gallery showcases various sharks, barracudas and eels, while Dragons Down Under has some of the smallest sea creatures - sea dragons, seahorses and pipefish.

The aquarium's newest gallery, Waves of Wonder was unveiled last year. It houses the center's second largest exhibit - Heart of the Sea.

The exhibit offers guests a chance to learn about the aquarium's conservation efforts to rehabilitate endangered sea life — using multi-camera technology and live programs to explain that work.

### IF YOU GO

#### The Florida Aquarium

**WHERE:** 701 Channelside Drive in Tampa

**WHEN:** Open daily from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**COST:** Ticket prices vary daily

**DETAILS:** As one of Tampa's hotspots, The Florida Aquarium has several galleries featuring aquatic wildlife to view and even swim with. A theater, diner, gift shop and water park also add to the entertainment factor.

**INFO:** To learn more about the aquarium, call (813) 273-4000, or visit FLAaquarium.org.

And, if looking through a glass window doesn't satisfy your curiosity, you can even swim with sea life.

Under the supervision of a trained diver, guests can view animals up-close and be apart of the exhibit, too.

Roger Germann, president of the aquarium, said these offerings bring more awareness to the plight facing aquatic life — and aim to motivate people to be more conscious about keeping oceans litter-free.

With an educational tutorial, guests can sit in the 4-D theater room wearing three-dimensional glasses, feeling just inches away from underwater spectacles.

The newly renovated Mosaic Center has several ballrooms, which can be used for meetings, birthday parties and other special events.

It also houses an art gallery showcasing images of various birds by photographer Jim Gray.

### New turtle rehab opens in Apollo Beach

The Bay Area has a new, safe haven to nurse wounded and malnourished turtles from various coasts off the United States.

The Sea Turtle Rehabilitation Center officially opened on Jan. 23, taking in its first batch of turtles two weeks later.

The Apollo Beach rehab is a branch of The Florida Aquarium, and has been at least a decade in the making.

"There was a moment where we started seeing more and more turtles that needed helped," said Roger Germann, president and CEO of The Florida Aquarium.

Once a plan was set in motion for the \$4.1 million center, the project received funding from the state, as well as donors, Germann said.

The first group of sea critters arrived on Feb. 4. It included a half-dozen green turtles and one loggerhead turtle.

They were rescued off the U.S. East Coast from freezing waters due to the harsh weather of this past winter.

Physical therapy also plays an important role in regaining health, as the two-story center offers several rehabilitation pools. One of those pools is an 11-foot turtle dive tank, the deepest one in Florida.

While the rehab is in full operation, a date has not been set to open it for public viewing.

There's also a gift shop, a café and an outdoor bar, where adult beverages can be purchased.

Kids can get soaked at the Splash Pad water park, and there's a Wild Dolphin Cruise available, too.

The aquarium aims to promote recreation and education, Germann said.

"We think that one of the best ways to get people to make change is through inspiration and entertainment," the aquarium president said.

"Animals here serve as ambassadors, educators and as science."

To learn more on the aquarium or to purchase tickets, call (813) 273-4000, or visit FLAaquarium.org.



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# PET of the WEEK



## Simon likes to snuggle

Simon, who speaks with a British accent, is 7 years old and is the best little Yorkie. He is not a barker unless someone is at the door or if you mention the word 'mail.' Simon enjoys watching the birds come to the bird feeder, and his favorite treat is baby carrots. Simon's proud parents are Beth and Ray Ross, of Land O' Lakes.

# Adopt A Friend FOR LIFE



## Aster is a longtime resident

Aster is one of the longest residing dogs at the shelter, and she's nearing her 6-month residency mark. Her spirits are in no means dampened, but she would very much love to find her forever home soon. Aster is about 8 years old, but age does not hold this gal back from playing with the younger pups in playgroup. She seems to do well with other dogs, but a meet-and-greet is encouraged.



## Nina is a rock star

Nina's beautiful smile currently decorates the shelter's Facebook page, as this sweet girl can't help but be happy all the time. Nina is about 4 years old and is one of our playgroup rock stars, and would enjoy meeting your other dogs if you have them. This gorgeous gal would love to find her forever home.

If you would like to adopt Aster or Nina, be sure to visit Pasco County Animal Services at 19640 Dogpatch Lane in Land O' Lakes. The adoption center is open Tuesday through Saturday, noon to 6:30 p.m. All adoption fees include spay/neuter, microchip and vaccines. For more information, email [adoptionpartners@pascocountyfl.net](mailto:adoptionpartners@pascocountyfl.net).

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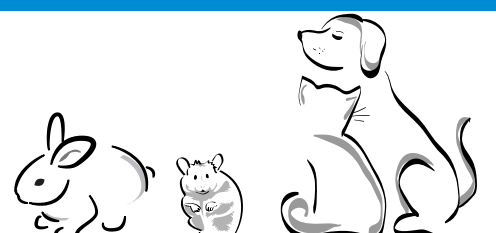
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# LOCAL WILDLIFE



## The circle of life

Betsy Crisp saw this vulture standing proudly over his discovery in front of the emergency gates to Magnolia Point in Land O' Lakes. Crisp suspects the soft shell turtle was probably hit by a car.

## PET PAWS

### PET PHOTOS

Guests can have their pet's photo taken with the Easter Bunny at The Shops at Wiregrass, 28211 Paseo Drive in Wesley Chapel, April 8 and April 15, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

For information, call (813) 994-2242.

### DOG-FRIENDLY YARDS

The Jimmie B. Keel Regional Library, 2902 W. Bearss Ave., in Carrollwood, will present "Master Gardener: Dog-Friendly Yards" April 9 at 7 p.m., in partnership with the Hillsborough County Extension Service.

Adult-only participants can learn the dos and don'ts for landscaping a yard to make you and your pet happy.

For information call (813) 273-3652, or visit HCPLC.org.

### VACCINE CLINICS

Pasco County Animal Services, 19640 Dogpatch Lane in Land O' Lakes, hosts a vaccination and microchip clinic in its Adoption Center every Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Residents from all counties can bring pets in.

All Pasco County residents are required to purchase a county animal license, if they are purchasing a rabies vaccination.

Anyone requesting a three-year vaccination, needs to provide proof of previous vaccination.

### LIVING WITH ALLIGATORS

The American alligator is an important part of Florida's wetland habitats, found throughout the state in freshwater lakes, ponds, swamps and slow-moving rivers.

During spring, alligators become more active and visible. When temperatures rise, their metabolism increases and they begin seeking prey.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) recommends taking precautions when having fun in and around the water.

Because alligators control their body temperature by basking in the sun, they can be easily observed. If you see an alligator, keep your distance. Also, never feed alligators because it is dangerous and illegal. When fed, alligators can overcome their natural wariness and learn to associate people with food.

Alligators are most active between dusk and dawn. To reduce the chances of conflicts with alligators, swim only during daylight hours and in designated swimming areas.

The FWC also recommends pet owners keep their animals on a leash and away from the water because pets can resemble an alligator's natural prey.

If you believe an alligator poses a threat to people, pets or property, call FWC's toll-free Nuisance Alligator Hotline at (866) 392-4286.

### SHARE YOUR PET NEWS

If you have pet news about adoptions, walks or other events for pet owners and their pets, you can let us know by sending us an email. We just need the basics: who, what, when, where and why.

The information should be submitted two weeks prior to the desired publication date. We also need a contact name and number, in case we have questions.

There is no guarantee of publication, but we consider each item we receive.

If you'd like to make a submission, send it to [news@lakerlutznews.com](mailto:news@lakerlutznews.com).

Readers can now find Pets of the Week and Local Wildlife photos on our website at [LakerLutznews.com](http://LakerLutznews.com), under the Pets/Wildlife link.

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# BUSINESS DIGEST

Send business news to [news@lakerlutznews.com](mailto:news@lakerlutznews.com)

## CHAMBER NETWORKING

The Central Pasco Chamber of commerce will have its Wednesday morning networking on April 3 from 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m., at Hungry Harry's Family Bar-B-Que, 3130 Land O' Lakes Blvd. The charge is \$12 at the door for a full breakfast.

## WOMEN-N-CHARGE

Join the ladies of Women-n-Charge on April 5 from 11:15 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., at

Plantation Palms Golf Club, 232523 Plantation Palms Blvd., in Land O' Lakes. The meeting includes lunch, a presentation and time to network. The theme of the meeting is "Networking to Highlight Your Business." To register or to RSVP, call (813) 600-9848, or email [info@women-n-charge.com](mailto:info@women-n-charge.com).

## CENTRAL PASCO CHAMBER

The Central Pasco Chamber of Commerce will have its general lunch and membership meeting on April 9 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Plantation Palms Golf Club, 23253 Plantation Palms Blvd., in Land O' Lakes. For more information, visit [CentralPascoChamber.com](http://CentralPascoChamber.com).

## SBA EMERGING LEADERS

The U.S. Small Business Administration announced the launch of the 2019 Emerging Leaders Initiative for executives of small businesses poised for growth in emerging markets. Local area recruitment for the 2019 training cycle is ongoing at designated SBA District Offices. Those

## Pasco administrator to speak to Chamber

Pasco County Administrator Dan Biles will be the featured speaker at the North Tampa Bay Chamber monthly membership luncheon on April 10. Doors open at 11:15 a.m., the buffet begins at 11:30 a.m., and the program starts at noon. The event will be at the Fox Hollow Golf Club, 10050 Trent Jones Parkway in Trinity. To RSVP, prepay or for other information, go to [NorthTampaBayChamber.com/events](http://NorthTampaBayChamber.com/events).



interested in learning more should visit [SBA.gov/emergingleaders](http://SBA.gov/emergingleaders).

## OPEN DOORS FORUM

The 2019 Open Doors Forum aims to connect minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, and small businesses to opportunities in government contracting, across Hillsborough County. Nearly 50 exhibitors are expected at the event offering opportunities for companies

to do work with them. The event is set for April 5 at 9 a.m., at the T. Pepin Hospitality Centre, 4121 N. 50th St., in Tampa. To register or get more information, call (813) 307-8309 or visit [HCFLGov.net/MWSBE](http://HCFLGov.net/MWSBE).

## NEW DIRECTOR OF SALES

Laura Formon has joined Home Care Now as its director of sales and marketing.

Continued on next page

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# BUSINESS DIGEST

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Home Care Now offers in-home support in Pinellas, Pasco and Hillsborough counties. To reach Forman, email [lformon@homecarenow.us](mailto:lformon@homecarenow.us), or call her at (727) 243-1017.

## PASCO EDC SEEKS AWARD NOMINATIONS

The Pasco Economic Development Council Inc., has an annual awards program that recognizes achievements of top companies in Pasco County for their technology,

innovation, job creation, growth and capital investment in the area.

The economic development council also measures companies' involvement in community activities.

Nominations for this year's awards are accepted until the close of business on April 30. Winners will be announced at the Pasco EDC's 33rd annual Awards and Trade Show in September.

For specifics on the categories, visit [PEDC.com](http://PEDC.com).

## ZEPHYRHILLS CHAMBER

The Greater Zephyrhills Chamber of Commerce has its breakfast meeting on the first Thursday of the month at 7 a.m., at Golden Corral, 6877 Gall Blvd., in

Zephyrhills. The cost is \$8 for members and \$10 for visitors. Cash, checks and debit/credit cards are accepted.

## EAST PASCO NETWORKING

Cliff McDuffie, former mayor of Zephyrhills, will be the featured speaker at the April 23 breakfast meeting of the East Pasco Networking Group. The meeting, which starts at 7:30 a.m., will be at IHOP, at 13100 U.S. 301 in Dade City.

## DADE CITY CHAMBER

Dr. Rodrigo Torres, chief medical officer for AdventHealth Dade City and AdventHealth Zephyrhills, will be the speaker at the Greater Dade City Chamber of Commerce breakfast meeting on April 16, at

13100 Fort King Road, Classroom 108. Networking begins at 7 a.m., followed by breakfast and program at 7:30 a.m.

RSVP and pre-payment are required by noon on April 11. Even those with 12-month pre-pay offer must RSVP.

## 'SAUCY QUEEN' TO SPEAK

Michele Northrup, also known as the Saucy Queen, will be the featured speaker at the WOW-TOO meeting on April 17 from 8:30 a.m. to 10 a.m., at the Holiday Inn Express-Trinity, 2125 Corporate Center Drive in Trinity. The charge is \$5 for online prepay or at the door. The charge is \$10 for non-members or if the fee is invoiced. For more information, please visit [NorthTampaBayChamber.com/events](http://NorthTampaBayChamber.com/events).

The Laker/Lutz News publishes Business Digest every week. We welcome submissions from local businesses announcing new locations, staff promotions, ground breakings, ribbon cuttings, expansions and other business news. We also welcome news of low-cost or free seminars aimed at helping local entrepreneurs. Information should be submitted two weeks ahead of the desired publication date. Please send your submissions, at least two weeks prior to the desired publication date, to [news@lakerlutznews.com](mailto:news@lakerlutznews.com).

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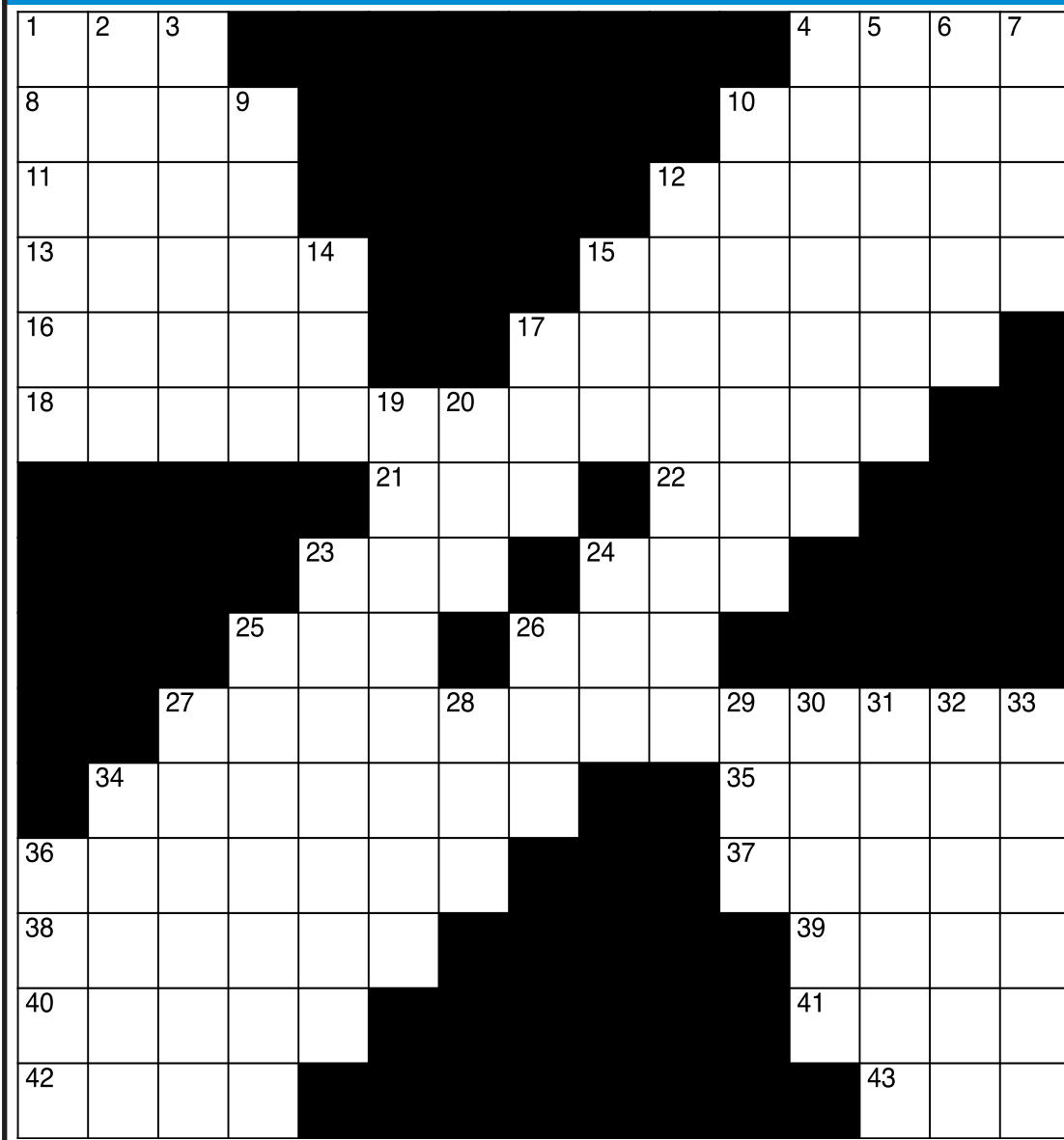
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23. Deutschland
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27. "Walter White"
34. The opera has one
35. Honk
36. Disorganization
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14. China's chairman
15. Al Bundy's wife
17. Acid in all living cells
19. Told
20. Displays heartbeat
23. Softly
24. Swiss river
25. Small chapel
26. Electronic countermeasures
27. Asian nation
28. Neither
29. Peacock network
30. List of candidates
31. Medieval garment
32. Type of juice
33. "Coach" actor
34. Puerto Rican dance music La \_\_\_
36. Texas politician Ted

SEE SOLUTIONS, PAGE 7B

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## Yard Sales

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**HUNTER'S GREEN COMMUNITY SALE**  
 Sat, April 6, from 7:30am - 11:30am  
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**Campus Maintenance Mechanic I (Job # 0816) – Search Reopened II**  
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### IN THE ERIE COUNTY PROBATE COURT, SANDUSKY OHIO

Estate of Milton F. Kempf

To Christina M. Hendrix, whose last place of residence is unknown: You will hereby take notice that on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2019, Shirley Caldwell filed an Estate of behalf of Milton F. Kempf, deceased, in the Erie County Probate Court, Case Number 20191065, requesting to be appointed Executor, and filing an Application to Admit a Will which purported to be the decedent's last will and testament, dated July 16, 2015.

The Executor, Shirley Caldwell, hereby prays that the named Christina M. Hendrix be required to answer and set forth any claim she may against the estate, or challenge she may have to the legitimacy of the Will admitted to probate, or be forever barred from asserting the same; that the Will filed with the Court dated 3-6-2019 be admitted without objection, and for such other and further relief as to which the Court may deem proper.

The named Christina M. Hendrix is hereby notified that she is required to file any objection to the Will or the appointment of Shirley Caldwell not later than four months after the fiduciary has filed an certificate with the Court that notice has been given to all next of kin and beneficiaries of decedent's Will, said publication to be published for 30 days, beginning the 27<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2019. If you do not file an Objection to said Application to Admit Will to Probate in the Erie County Probate Court, Erie County Courthouse, 323 Columbus Ave., #7, Sandusky, OH 44870, within said time, service will be complete. You are also required to file and serve upon Shirley Caldwell, a copy of your Objections.

Shirley Caldwell  
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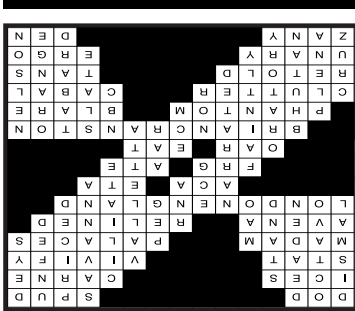
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